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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(AUTHORISED EDITION),

FOURTH SERIES.

FIFTH SESSION OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

OF THE

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

4 EDWARD VII.

VOLUME CXXXII.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF MARCH
TO THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF MARCH, 1904.

FOURTH VOLUME OF SESSION.

1904.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED,
UNDER CONTRACT WITH HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE,
BY
WYMAN AND SONS, LIMITED, FETTER LANE, LONDON.

8472

CHRONOLOGY OF "THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES."

THE PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY contains all that can be collected of the Legislative History of this country from the Conquest to the close of the XVIIIth Century (1803), 36 vols. The chief sources whence these Debates are derived are the Constitutional History, 24 vols.; Sir Simonds D'Ewes' Journal; Debates of the Commons in 1620 and 1621; Chandler and Timberland's Debates, 22 vols.; Grey's Debates of the Commons, from 1667 to 1694, 10 vols.; Almon's Debates, 24 vols.; Debrett's Debates, 63 vols.; The Hardwicke Papers; Debates in Parliament by Dr. Johnson, &c., &c.

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Justices of the Peace Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 48

House adjourned at a quarter before Eight o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: FRIDAY, 18TH MARCH, 1904.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (PETITION FOR ADDITIONAL PROVISION) (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for additional Provision in the following Bill, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz. :—

London County Council (General Powers) Bill.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders 48

Felixstowe Gas Bill.—Gomersal Gas Bill; Kettering Improvement Bill; Norwich Water Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time .. 49

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP No. 1).—Ordered, That Captain John Whitley Dixon, R.N., do attend the Committee on Group No. 1 of Railway Bills upon Monday next, at half-past Eleven of the Clock 49

Croydon Gas Bill.—Southend-on-Sea Gas Bill; Ryde Gas Bill; Brixham Gas Bill; Great Northern Railway Bill; London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway Bill; Great Central and Midland Joint Railways Bill. Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed .. 49

Birkdale Improvement Bill.—Reported from the Police and Sanitary Committee with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 49

Harrow Road and Paddington Tramways Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 49

Watford and District Tramways (Extension of Time) Bill.—Reported [Preamble not proved]; Report to lie upon the Table 49

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Metropolitan Common Scheme (Farnborough) Provisional Order Bill.—Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered upon Monday next 49

Metropolitan Common Scheme (Hillingdon East) Provisional Order Bill.—Reported without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next 50

PETITIONS.

ELECTIONS (HOURS OF CLOSING).—Petition from Bethnal Green, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table 50

LICENCES (RENEWAL).—Petitions against alteration of Law; from Altrincham; Bute; Briercliffe; Golborne; Burton Latimer; East Ham; Bleadney; Peckham; Whitby; Bacup; Seedley; Theddingworth; Pontywain; Witney; Eccles; Bridgwater; Glantwrch: Pentredwr; Gurnos; and Llansamlet; to lie upon the Table 50

PUBLIC LIBRARIES BILL.—Petition from Sunderland, for alteration; to lie upon the Table 50

SALE OF BUTTER BILL.—Petitions against: from Stoke Newington (two); Dover; Guildford; Faversham; Sheerness; and Wolverhampton; to lie upon the Table 50

TRANSVAAL (CHINESE LABOUR ORDINANCE).—Petition from Theddingworth, for withdrawal; to lie upon the Table 50

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COLLEGE CHARTER ACT, 1871 (YORKSHIRE COLLEGE, LEEDS).—Paper [presented 17th March] to be printed. [No. 104.] 50

TRANSVAAL.—Copy presented, of further correspondence relating to the Transvaal Labour Question [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 50

MARRIAGES, BIRTHS, AND DEATHS (ENGLAND).—Copy presented, of General Abstract of Marriages, Births, and Deaths registered in England and Wales in the year 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 51

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX).—Copy presented, of Order made by the County Council of the county of Middlesex, altering certain Polling Districts in the Harrow Parliamentary Division [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 51

METROPOLITAN CATTLE MARKET.—Accounts presented, for the year 1903, with an account of extraordinary works executed other than the general repairs for the same period [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 51

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.—Copy presented, of Returns of accidents and casualties as reported to the Board of Trade by the several Railway Companies in the United Kingdom during the year ended 31st December, 1903, together with Reports of the Inspecting Officers of the Railway Department to the Board of Trade upon certain accidents which were inquired into [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 51

PAPER LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.—Land Transfer Rules. Copy of Rules made in pursuance of The Land Transfer Act, 1875, dated 18th December, 1903 [by Act] 51

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

IMPROVEMENTS OF HOUSE OF COMMONS—EXPENDITURE.—Question, Mr. John Ellis (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe); Answer, Lord Balcarres 52

SUEZ CANAL CONVENTION.—Question, Mr. Moon (St. Pancras, N.); Answer, Earl Percy 52

TRADESMEN—CASH ON DELIVERY POSTAL SYSTEM.—Question, Sir John Rolleston (Leicester); Answer, Lord Stanley 52

SALE OF POISONS.—Question, Sir Thomas Dewar (Tower Hamlets, St. George's); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 53

GRANTS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS.—Question, Mr. Morrell (Oxfordshire, Woodstock); Answer, Sir William Anson 53

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN ASSAM.—Question, Sir Mancherjee Bhownaggree (Bethnal Green, N.E.); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 54

RE-ARMING OF ARTILLERY.—Question, Sir Charles Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 54

ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEBATE ON VOTE OF CENSURE.—Question, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs); Answer, The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (Sir A. Acland Hood, Somersetshire, Wellington) 55

Railways (Private Sidings) Bill. [SECOND READING.]—Order for Second Reading read.

Sir William Tomlinson (Preston) 55

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Sir Frederick Banbury (Camberwell, Peckham) 58
Sir James Joicey (Durham, Chester-le-Street) 59
The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gerald Balfour, Leeds, Central) .. 60
Mr. Cripps (Lancashire, Stretford) 60
Mr. Cohen (Islington, E.) 60
Mr. Reginald Lucas (Portsmouth) 60
Mr. Alexander Cross (Glasgow, Camlachie) 61

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.

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Hall Marking of Foreign Plate Bill. [SECOND READING.]—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Samuel Roberts (Sheffield, Ecclesall) 61

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Caldwell (Lanarkshire, Mid) 64
Mr. Stuart Wortley (Sheffield, Hallam) 65
Sir James Joicey (Durham, Chester-le-Street) 66
Sir E. Durning-Lawrence (Cornwall, Truro) 67
Mr. Schwann (Manchester, N.) 69
Mr. Lawrence (Liverpool, Abercrombie) 71
Mr. Henderson (Durham, Barnard Castle) 71
Mr. Lowe (Birmingham, Edgbaston) 72
Sir Joseph Leese (Lancashire, Accrington) 73
Sir Francis Powell (Wigan) 73
Mr. Bull (Hammersmith) 74
Sir Howard Vincent (Sheffield, Central) 74
Sir Thomas Esmonde (Wexford, N.) 76
Mr. Murray (Coventry) 76
Mr. Norman (Wolverhampton, S.) 77
The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gerald Balfour, Leeds, Central) .. 78
Colonel Denny (Kilmarnock Burghs) 80

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 96 ; Noes, 53. (Division List No. 63.)

Bill accordingly read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Law, etc.

Savings Banks Acts Amendment Bill. [SECOND READING].—Order for Second Reading read.

Sir Albert Rollit (Islington, S.) 81

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Yoxall (Nottingham, W.) 85
Mr. Lawrence (Liverpool, Abercrombie) 85
Sir James Haslett (Belfast, N.) 86
Sir William Tomlinson (Preston) 86
The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.) 86
Sir Samuel Hoare (Norwich) 87

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.

Rating of Machinery Bill. [SECOND READING.]—Order for Second Reading read.

Sir William Holland (Yorkshire, W.R., Rotherham) 88
Mr. Chapman (Cheshire, Hyde) 89

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Sir James Joicey (*Durham, Chester-le-Street*) 90
Col. Kenyon-Slaney (*Shropshire, Newport*) 93

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Sir James Joicey.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. Emmott (*Oldham*) 97
Sir Samuel Hoare (*Norwich*) 100
Mr. George Whiteley (*Yorkshire, W.R., Pudsey*) 102
Mr. Chaplin (*Lincolnshire, Sleaford*) 103
Mr. Fenwick (*Northumberland, Wansbeck*) 103
The Secretary to the Local Government Board (*Mr. Grant Lawson, Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk*) 104

Sir. William Holland rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes, 126; Noes, 82. (Division List No. 64.)

Question put accordingly, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

The House divided:—Ayes, 114; Noes, 94. (Division List No. 65.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Sir William Holland moved that the Bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Trade.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc."

And, it being after half-past Five of the clock, and objection being taken to Further Proceeding, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Wednesday next.

The Vote of Censure.

Sir A. Acland Hood 111
Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman 112

Adjourned at twelve minutes before Six o'clock till Monday next.

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HOUSE OF LORDS: MONDAY, 21st MARCH, 1904.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with :—Great Northern and City Railway (Extension of Time). The same was ordered to lie on the Table 113

Standing Orders Committee.

Report from, That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Middlesborough, Stockton-on-Tees, and Thornaby Tramways Bill ought to be dispensed with, provided that the powers to construct so much of Tramways Nos. 1, 2, and 2a as is outside the urban district of Eston be struck out of the Bill, unless the necessary consents of the local and road authorities to the said tramways be proved before the Committee on the Bill, and provided that the powers to construct Tramways Nos. 4 and 5 and so much of Tramway No. 3 as is outside the borough of Thornaby-on-Tees be struck out of the Bill.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the North Wales Electric Power Bill [H.L.] ought to be dispensed with, and the Bill allowed to proceed.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Bristol Tramways (Extensions) Bill [H.L.] ought to be dispensed with and the Bill be allowed to proceed, provided that the powers to construct Tramways Nos. 7 and 9 be struck out of the Bill, and that the powers to construct Tramways Nos. 3 and 5 be also struck out of the Bill, unless the consent of the Warmley Rural District Council to the said tramways be proved before the Committee on the Bill, and that the powers to construct Tramway No. 4 be struck out, unless proof be given before the Examiner that the consents of the local and road authorities have been obtained, and that the Standing Orders applicable to that tramway in other respects have been complied with. Read, and agreed to .. 113

Cambrian Railways Bill [H.L.]. Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 114

Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company Bill [H.L.]; Manchester Ship Canal (Finance) Bill [H.L.]. Committee to meet to-morrow .. 114

Huddersfield Corporation Act, 1902 (Amendment) Bill [H.L.].–Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, the opposition thereto having been withdrawn ; read, and ordered to lie on the Table. The orders made on the 19th and 25th of February discharged ; and Bill committed for to-morrow 114

Ipswich Dock Commission Bill [H.L.].—The King's consent signified ; Bill read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons 114

Harlow and Sawbridgeworth Gas Bill [H.L.] ; Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Bill [H.L.] ; Barry Railway (Extension of Time, etc.) Bill [H.L.]. Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons 114

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PETITIONS.

Weights and Measures (Metric System) Bill [h.l.].—Petitions in favour of; of Town, City, and County Councils of Brechin; Buckie; Camberwell; Chelsea; Derby; Exeter; Falkirk; Luton; Newport (Mon.); Northampton; Nottingham; Peterhead; Thornaby-on-Tees; Tillicoultry; Chambers of Commerce of Birmingham; Federation of Foreign Chambers of Commerce; Netherlands; Salt; Warrington; Association of Trade Protection Societies of the United Kingdom, representing 50,000; Colwyn Bay Grocers' Association; Eastbourne and District Grocers' Association, representing forty; Cardiff Trade and Labour Council, representing 8,500; Durham Miners' Association, representing 75,314; Rochester Naturalists' Club; Rochester Philosophical Club; Silk Association of Great Britain and Ireland; Somersetshire Chamber of Agriculture; The Physical Society of London; The London School Board; Inspectors of Weights and Measures of Barrow-in-Furness; Cardiff (3); Glasgow (7); Ipswich (2); Kingstown; Newcastle-on-Tyne (3); Norfolk Central; Reading; Bute Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, Limited; Liebig's Extract of Meat Company, Limited; McCallum, D. B., and Son, Limited; Mount Stewart Dry Dock Company, Limited; Priestman Brothers, Limited; and persons signing. Read, and ordered to lie on the Table 114

Intoxicating Liquors.—Petition against the sale of, on Sundays; of inhabitants of Weymouth; and Yeovil. Read, and ordered to lie on the Table 115

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

Board of Education.—Statistics of public elementary schools, pupil teacher centres, and training colleges, 1902–1903 115

Local Government Board (Scotland).—Ninth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland, 1903 115

Bahamas.—General descriptive Report on the Bahamas Islands, in which is included the Annual Report for 1902. Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 115

Superannuation.—Treasury Minute, dated 12th March, 1904, declaring that for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the office of assistant legal adviser of the Foreign Office, professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired on the public service are required 115

Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889.—Annual Report on the state of the finances of the University of Glasgow under the provisions of Section 30 of the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889, for the year 1902-1903. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 115

NEW BILL.

Street Betting Bill [h.l.].—A Bill for the suppression of betting in streets and other public places—Was presented by the Lord Davey; read 1*a*; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Tuesday, the 3rd of May next. (No. 34) .. 116

Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Amendment) Bill [h.l.].—House in Committee (according to order). Bill reported without Amendment. Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow 116

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REGIMENTS ON FOREIGN SERVICE.

The Earl of Kinnoull 116
The Under-Secretary of State for War (*The Earl of Donoughmore*) 116

CHINESE LABOUR FOR THE TRANSVAAL.—Order of the day read for the adjourned debate on the Motion of the Lord Coleridge to resolve, "That this House disapproves of the importation of Chinese labourers into the Transvaal under the recent Ordinance until the grant to that country of full representative government."

The Lord Bishop of Hereford 117
Lord Norton 125
Viscount Goschen 129
The Earl of Camperdown 133
Earl Carrington 139
The First Lord of the Admiralty (*The Earl of Selborne*) 145
Lord Bishop of Canterbury 153
Lord Stanley of Alderley 162
The First Commissioner of Works (*Lord Windsor*) 167
The Earl of Shaftesbury 174
Lord Monkswell 177
The Marquess of Winchester 184
Lord Tweedmouth 186
The Earl of Lytton 198
The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (*The Marquess of Lansdowne*) 205

On Question,

Their Lordships divided:—Contents, 25; Not-Contents, 97.

House adjourned at Twelve o'clock (midnight), till To-morrow, a quarter past Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: MONDAY, 21ST MARCH, 1904.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz.:—Appleby Corporation Gas Bill [Lords]; London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Bill [Lords]. Ordered. That the Bills be read a second time 213

SUBSTITUTED BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, introduced in accordance with the provisions of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, originating in the Lords, and referred

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on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with viz. :—Govan Burgh (Electricity) Bill [Lords]; Young and Bell's Patents Bill [Lords]. Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time 213

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, re-on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz. :—Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill. Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time to-morrow .. 213

Littlestone-on-Sea and District Water Bill; South Shields Gas Bill. Read the third time, and passed 214

Chippenham Gas Bill; Great Eastern Railway Bill; Sheppy Gas Bill; Torquay Tramways Bill; Wellington (Somerset) Gas Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time 214

Metropolitan Common Scheme (Hillingdon East) Provisional Order Bill. Read the third time, and passed 214

Metropolitan Common Scheme (Farnborough) Provisional Order Bill. Considered; to be read the third time To-morrow 214

Soothill Nether Urban District Tramways Bill. Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 214

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP E.).

Sir ALEXANDER HARGREAVES BROWN reported from the Committee on Group E of Private Bills, That, for the convenience of parties, they had adjourned till Wednesday next, at half-past Eleven o'clock. Report to lie upon the Table 214

North and South Woolwich Electric Railway Bill. Reported [Parties do not proceed]; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 214

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP No. 4).—Mr. RUSSELL REA reported from the Committee on Group No. 4 of Railway Bills; That Sir Theodore Doxford, one of the members of the said Committee, was not present during the Sitting of the Committee this day. Report to lie upon the Table 214

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, " An Act to make provision for dealing with the Trustees' Preference Shares of the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company, Limited, and the Trustees' Certificates issued in respect thereof; and for other purposes." [New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company Bill [Lords.] 214

New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 214

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PETITIONS.

Borough Council Elections (Hours of Polling).—Petitions for legislation; from Lewisham; and Fulham; to lie upon the Table 215

Franchise and Removal of Women's Disabilities Bill.—Petition from Battersea, in favour; to lie upon the Table 215

Local Authorities (Qualification of Women) Bill.—Petition from Lewisham in favour; to lie upon the Table 215

Old Age Pensions (No. 2) Bill.—Petition from Battersea, in favour; to lie upon the Table 215

Parliamentary Franchise.—Petition from Wolverhampton, for extension to women; to lie upon the Table 215

Rating of Machinery Bill.—Petition from West Bromwich, against; to lie upon the Table 215

Re-Vaccination Bill.—Petition from Battersea, against; to lie upon the Table 215

Shops Bill.—Petition from Battersea, in favour; to lie upon the Table .. 215

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

Public Accounts (Navy Votes).—Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 17th March, 1904, authorising the temporary application of Surpluses on certain Navy Votes for the year 1903–4 to meet Excesses on other Navy Votes for the same year [pursuant to Resolution of the House of 4th March, 1879]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 105.] 215

Army Clothing Factory.—Annual Account presented, of the Royal Army Clothing Factory for the year 1902–3, with Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 106.] 215

Superannuations.—Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 12th March, 1904, declaring that for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the office of Assistant Legal Adviser of the Foreign Office, professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired in the public service are required [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 215

Board of Education (Public Elementary Schools, etc.).—Copy presented, of Statistics of Public Elementary Schools, Pupil Teacher Centres, and Training Colleges, 1902–3 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table... .. 216

Local Government Board (Scotland).—Copy presented, of Ninth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 216

University of Glasgow.—Copy presented, of Abstract of Accounts of the University of Glasgow for the year ending 30th September, 1903 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. (No. 107.) 216

BAHAMAS.—Copy presented, of General Descriptive Report of the Bahamas Islands, in which is included the Annual Report for 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 216

VENEZUELA (No. 1, 1904).—Copy presented, of Award of the Tribunal of Arbitration, constituted in virtue of the Protocols signed at Washington, 7th May, 1903, between Germany, Great Britain, and Italy, on the one hand, and Venezuela on the other hand [by Command]; to lie upon the Table .. 216

TRADE (BRITISH COLONIES WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES).—Return ordered, "showing, for 1901 and 1902, the imports from Foreign Countries into British India, the Self-Governing Colonies, and the following Crown Colonies: Straits Settlements, Ceylon, Mauritius, Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad, distinguishing (*a*) imports of food, drink, and tobacco; raw materials and articles mainly unmanufactured; and articles wholly or mainly manufactured; and (*b*) principal articles (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 322, of Session 1903)."—(*Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) 216

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LOAN EXPENDITURE FOR CIVIL AND REVENUE PURPOSES.—Question, Mr. Barran (Leeds, N.); Answer, Mr. Victor Cavendish 217

EXPENDITURE UNDER NAVAL WORKS ACT.—Question, Mr. Runciman (Dewsbury); Answer, Mr. Pretyman 217

CONSTRUCTION OF STEAMSHIPS UNDER CUNARD AGREEMENT.—Question, Mr. Runciman; Answer, Mr. Pretyman 219

CERTIFICATION OF DEATH.—Question, Sir Thomas Dewar (Tower Hamlets, St. George's); Answer, Mr. Akers-Douglas 219

CARCASES OF WHALES OFF SHETLAND COAST.—Question, Mr. Cathcart Wason (Orkney and Shetland); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 220

PROPOSED RAILWAY FROM DUNFERMLINE TO KINCARDINE.—Question, Mr. Bryce (Aberdeen, S.); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 220

TEACHERS' SUPERANNUATION.—Question, Mr. Stevenson (Suffolk, Eye); Answer, Sir William Anson 221

SEIZURE AND DISPOSAL OF CONTRABAND TOBACCO.—Question, Mr. Whitmore (Chelsea); Answer, Mr. Victor Cavendish 222

PENSIONS OF SENIOR ABSTRACTORS.—Question, Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton); Answer, Mr. Victor Cavendish 222

EXPENSES OF BRITISH OFFICERS ATTACHED TO BELLIGERENT FORCES IN THE FAR EAST.—Question, Sir John Colomb (Great Yarmouth); Answer, Mr. Victor Cavendish 223

SEATING OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN SCOTCH SCHOOLS.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, Mr. A. Graham Murray 223

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SALARIES OF IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS.—Question, Mr. William Abraham (Cork Co., N.E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 224

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AGRICULTURAL LEGISLATION AND ADMINISTRATION IN DENMARK.—Question, Mr. Channing (Northamptonshire, E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 225

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RE-ORGANISATION OF ROYAL ENGINEERS—LORD ESHER'S RECOMMENDATIONS.—Question, Mr. Charles Hobhouse (Bristol, E.); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 226

REPORT OF TRINIDAD RIOTS.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, Mr. Lyttelton .. 226

FINANCES OF TRANSVAAL AND ORANGE RIVER COLONY.—Questions, Mr. Sydney Buxton (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) and Sir Robert Reid (Dumfries Burghs); Answers, Mr. Lyttelton 226

TRANSVAAL LABOUR ORDINANCE—DATE OF COMING INTO OPERATION.—Question, Major Seely (Isle of Wight); Answer, Mr. Lyttelton 227

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MOUNTED INFANTRY VOLUNTEERS.—Question, Sir Howard Vincent (Sheffield, Central); Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Arnold-Forster, Belfast, W.) 228

BARRACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA.—Question, Mr. Ainsworth (Argyll); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 228

ARMY DISTRICTS INQUIRY.—Question, Sir Charles Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 228

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CUBAN SUGAR IMPORTS.—Question, Mr. Lough (Islington, W.); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 238

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GLANDERS.—Question, Captain Norton; Answer, Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey) 239

ORKNEY FISHERIES.—Question, Mr. Cathcart Wason; Answer, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Victor Cavendish, Derbyshire, W.) 240

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Tarbet and Listowel Coach Service.—Question, Mr. Lundon (Limerick, E.); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) .. 240

Fair Rent Cases in County Roscommon.—Question, Mr. James O'Kelly (Roscommon, N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 241

Mr. Parnell's Birthplace.—Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde (Wexford, N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndam 241

Knocalassa Farm, County Sligo.—Question, Mr. O'Dowd (Sligo, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 241

Labourers Cottages in Ireland.—Question, Mr. O'Shaughnessy (Limerick, W.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 242

Evicted Farm in Queen's County.—Question, Mr. Delany (Queen's County, Ossory); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 243

Trinity College Leases.—Question, Mr. Lonsdale (Armagh, N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 243

Threatening Notices in Galway.—Question, Mr. Duffy (Galway, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 243

Irish Language in Irish Schools.—Question, Mr. Thomas O'Donnell (Kerry, W.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 244

Royal Irish Constabulary Inspectors.—Question, Mr. Reddy (King's County, Birr); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 244

Reduction of Royal Irish Constabulary.—Question, Mr. Reddy; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 245

Butson Estate, Co. Galway.—Question, Mr. Roche (Galway, E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 245

Meath Hospital Staff.—Question, Mr. Clancy (Dublin Co., N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 246

Development Grant and Harbour Dredging.—Question, Mr. Ffrench (Wexford, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 246

Roscrea Post Office.—Questions, Mr. Kendal O'Brien (Tipperary, Mid), and Mr. Delany (Queen's County, Ossory); Answers, The Postmaster General (Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton) 247

Treatment of Imbeciles.—Question, Mr. Charles Hobhouse (Bristol, E.); Answer, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 247

The General Election—Russian Warships in the Red Sea.—Questions, Mr. Black (Banffshire); Answers, Mr. A. J. Balfour 248

Easter Holidays.—Question, Mr. John Ellis (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 248

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ussian Warships in the Red Sea.—Question, Sir Mark Stewart; Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 249

le of Butter Bill.—Questions, Mr. Lonsdale and Mr. O'Shaughnessy; Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 249

censing Bill.—Questions, Sir Wilfrid Lawson (Cornwall, Camborne); Answers, Mr. A. J. Balfour 250

he Submarine Disaster.—Question, Mr. Edmund Robertson; Answer, Mr. Pretyman 250

he Plague in Johannesburg.—Question, Mr. Swift MacNeill; Answer, Mr. Lyttelton 251

usiness of the House.—Question, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 251

NEW BILL.

anchise and Removal of Woman's Disabilities (No. 2) Bill—"To establish a single Franchise at all Elections and thereby to abolish University Representation, and to remove the Disabilities of Women," presented by Sir Charles Dilke; supported by Mr. Bell, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Keir Hardie, Mr. Atherley Jones, Mr. Logan, Dr. Macnamara, Captain Norton, Mr. Shackleton, and Mr. Sheehan; to be read a second time upon Friday, 10th June, and to be printed. [Bill 133.] 252

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tings of the House (Exemption from the Standing Order).—Ordered, That the preceedings on the Motion relating to Chinese Labour (Transvaal), if under discussion at Twelve o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House).—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour*) 252

inese Labour for the Transvaal.—Vote of Censure.

Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs) 252

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House disapproves the conduct of His Majesty's Government in advising the Crown not to disallow the Ordinance for the introduction of Chinese Labour into the Transvaal."—(*Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.*)

The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Lyttelton, Warwick and Leamington) 272
Mr. Moulton (Cornwall, Launceston) 289
Sir Gilbert Parker (Gravesend) 302
Mr. Bryce (Aberdeen, S.) 309
Sir Frederick Milner (Nottinghamshire, Bassetlaw) 320

And, it being half-past Seven of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned till this Evening's Sitting.

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EVENING SITTING.

CHINESE LABOUR (TRANSVAAL).—Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [21st March], "That this House disapproves the conduct of His Majesty's Government in advising the Crown not to disallow the Ordinance for the introduction of Chinese labour into the Transvaal."—(*Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.*)

Question again proposed.

Sir Frederick Milner 321
Mr. Haviland Burke (King's County, Tullamore) 327
Sir Harry Seton-Karr (St. Helens) 332
Major Seely (Isle of Wight) 335
Mr. Robson (South Shields) 340
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 343
Mr. Asquith (Fifeshire, E.) 356

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 242; Noes, 299. (Division List No. 66.)

IMPERIAL REVENUE (COLLECTION AND EXPENDITURE) (GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND).—Return ordered, "relating to Imperial Revenue (Collection and Expenditure) (Great Britain and Ireland) for the year ending the 31st day of March, 1904 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 256, of session 1903)."—(*Mr. J. A. Pease.*) 371

Adjourned at half after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: TUESDAY, 22ND MARCH, 1904.

MARQUESS OF SLIGO.—Ordered, That the Report of the Lord Chancellor of the United Kingdom, made to the House of Lords on Friday last, that the right of the Marquess of Sligo to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland has been established to his satisfaction, be sent to the Clerk of the Crown in Ireland together with a certificate stating that such Report has been made, and that the House has ordered it to be sent to the said Clerk of the Crown in Ireland 373

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—Corbridge Gas; Great Eastern Railway (Steamboats).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 373

Marylebone Chapels (Saint James, Westmoreland Street) Bill [H.L.].—Committed. 373

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neside Tramways and Tramroads Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 373

e for **Duke of York's School Bill** [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next .. 373

w River Company Bill [H.L.]; York Town and Blackwater Gas Bill [H.L.]; Southend Water Bill; Barnard Castle Gas Bill [H.L.]; Elysée Palace Hotel Company Bill [H.L.]; West Metropolitan Railway (Abandonment) Bill [H.L.]; Victoria University of Yorkshire Bill [H.L.]; Nuneaton and Chilvers Coton Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]; Ticehurst and District Water and Gas Bill [H.L.]; Huddersfield Corporation Act, 1902 (Amendment) Bill [H.L.]; Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments 373

sport Water Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 374

hitby Gas Bill; Hampton-in-Arden Gas Bill.—Read 2ª, and committed .. 374

nemouth Gas Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons 374

ston, Chorley, and Horwich Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª, Amendments made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons 374

tropolitan Common Scheme (Hillingdon East) Provisional Order Bill.—Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 35.) 374

lestone-on-Sea and District Water Bill; South Shields Gas Bill.—Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; and referred to the Examiners .. 374

lington Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Bristol Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Ebbw Vale Urban District Water Bill [H.L.]; Harrogate Waterworks Tramroad Bill [H.L.]; Leeds Corporation (Waterworks) Railway Bill [H.L.]; Llanelly Harbour Bill [H.L.]; Belfast Corporation (Tramways) Bill [H.L.]; Holywood Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Metropolitan District Railway Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; (viz.)—

Craven,	L. Shute (*V. Barrington*),
Camperdown (*chairman*),	L. Biddulph;
Boston,	

agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly. The Committee to meet on Thursday the 21st of April next at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills 374

ter Electric Power Bill [H.L.]; Lancashire Electric Power Bill [H.L.]; Lothians Electric Power Bill [H.L.]; Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Electric Power Bill [H.L.]; Belfast and North-East Ireland Electricity and Power Gas Bill [H.L.]; Clyde Valley Electrical Power Bill [H.L.]; Buxton

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Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]; Derwent Valley Water Board Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; (viz.)—

E. Lauderdale (*chairman*),
E. Beauchamp,
L. Saltoun,
L. Monteagle of Brandon,
L. Estcourt;

agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly. The Committee to meet on Thursday the 21st of April next at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills. 374

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COMMERCIAL, No. 3 (1904).—Reports on the constitution and functions of Ministries of Commerce or analagous branches of Foreign Administrations (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, Commercia, No. 12 (1889) [Cd. 5674]. Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table .. 375

Naval Prize Bill [H.L.]. [SECOND READING.]—Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

The Lord Chancellor (*The Earl of Halsbury*) 375

Moved, That the Bill be now read 2ª.—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

Lord Alverstone 376

On Question, Bill read 2ª, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House of Thursday next.

THE VOLUNTEERS—ALLOWANCES.

The Earl of Stradbrooke 376
The Under Secretary of State for War (*The Earl of Donoughmore*) .. 377

Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Amendment) Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª (according to order); Amendments (Privilege) made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons 378

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Five o'clock, to Thursday next, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: TUESDAY, 22ND MARCH, 1904.

The House met at two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Felixstowe Gas Bill; Gomersal Gas Bill; Kettering Improvement Bill; Norwich Water Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 378

Bexhill Water and Gas Bill; North Staffordshire Railway Bill; Sutton Gas Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 378

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ddlesborough, Stockton-on-Tees, and Thornaby Tramways Bill.—Read a second time, and committed 379

etropolitan Common Scheme (Farnborough) Provisional Order Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 379

etropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill.—Read a second time, and committed 379

aring Cross, Euston, and Hampstead Railway Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table and to be printed 379

ANDING ORDERS.

Resolutions reported from the Select Committee:—

1. "That, in the case of the London County Council (General Powers) Bill, Petition for additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with. That the parties be permitted to introduce their additional Provision if the Committee on the Bill think fit."

2. "That, in the case of the Bristol Tramways (Extensions) Bill [Lords], The Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with. That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill, provided that the powers to construct Tramways Nos. 7 and 9 be struck out of the Bill; that the powers to construct Tramways Nos. 3 and 5 be struck out of the Bill, unless the consent of the Warmley Rural District Council be proved before the Committee on the Bill; that the powers to construct Tramway No. 4 be struck out of the Bill, unless proof can be given before the Examiner that the consents of the local and road authorities have been obtained, and that the Standing Orders applicable to that tramway in other respects have been complied with. That the Committee on the Bill do report how far such Order has been complied with."

Resolutions agreed to. 379

SAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to enable the Ipswich Dock Commissioners to construct certain works in connection with their docks to make a tramway and tramroad; to raise additional money; and for other purposes." [Ipswich Dock Commission Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for incorporating and conferring powers on the Harlow and Sawbridgeworth Gas Company; and for other purposes." [Harlow and Sawbridgeworth Gas Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the powers of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board with respect to the levying of rates." [Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to extend the time of the completion of certain railways by the Barry Railway Company; and for other purposes." [Barry Railway (Extension of Time, etc.) Bill [Lords.] .. 379

wich Dock Commission Bill [Lords]; Harlow and Sawbridgeworth Gas Bill [Lords]; Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Bill [Lords]; Barry Railway (Extension of Time, etc.) Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 380

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PETITIONS.

Licence Holders.—Petition from Southampton, for redress of grievances; to lie upon the Table 380

Licences (Renewal),—Petitions against alteration of Law; from Fulbourne; Enfield Highway; Salford; Chelsea; London (two); Chorley; Standish; Astley Bridge; Dundee; Winchester; Sunderland; Bolton (four); Burnley; Leicester; Stockport; Bredbury; Cwmtwrch; Taunton; Shrewsbury Farnworth (two); Bo'ness; Gwersyllt and Rhosrobin; Coedpoeth (two); Rhosymedre; Johnston; Ruabon; Bryn Eglwys; Horsham; Rhos; Holyhead (two); Cemaes; Carnforth; Adwy's Clawd; Gareglefn; Peterhead (two); Lewes; Liverpool; Todmorden; Redruth; Hebden Bridge; Crawley; Llangristiolus; Failsworth; Tulse Hill; Burnbank Hamilton; and Cardiff; to lie upon the Table 380

Sale of Butter Bill.—Petitions against; from Wellingborough (two); and Bolton; to lie upon the Table 381

Transvaal (Chinese Labour Ordinance).—Petitions for withdrawal; from Farnworth (two); and Scarborough; to lie upon the Table 381

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

Foreign Ministries of Commerce (Commercial, No. 3, 1904).—Copy presented, of Reports on the Constitution and Functions of Ministries of Commerce or Analogous Branches of Foreign Administrations [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 381

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 3128 to 3130 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 381

Pauperism (England and Wales) (Monthly Statements).—Copy ordered, "of Statements for each month of the year 1904 of the number of Paupers relieved in England and Wales (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 41, of Session 1903)."—(*Mr. Grant Lawson.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 108.] 381

Labourers' Cottages (Ireland).—Return ordered, "in respect of Labourers' Cottages in Ireland, showing: (1) County; (2) Rural District; (3) Valuation of Rural District; (4) Number of Labourers' Cottages (*a*) built, (*b*) in course of construction; (5) Amount of Loans (*a*) sanctioned, (*b*) received; (6) Amount required to be raised annually in repayment of Loans sanctioned; (7) Amount which would be raised by the maximum rate of one shilling in the pound allowed for purposes of Acts; (8) Rate per pound required to raise amount specified in Column 6; (9) Present poundage rate levied on Rural District for Labourers' Acts purposes; (10) Amount of Exchequer Contribution for the year ended the 31st day of March, 1904; (11) Amount of rent received from tenants of cottages and plots during year; (12) Unissued balance, if any, of County's share of Exchequer Contribution; (13) Totals per County and Province, and for all Ireland; (14) The Return to be made up to the 31st day of March, 1904 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 198, of Session 1903)."—(*Mr. O'Shaughnessy.*) 381

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Sinking of Kish Bank Lightship.—Question, Mr. Charles McArthur (Liverpool, Exchange); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 382

Loss of Fittings for the Fastnet Lighthouse.—Question, Mr. Charles McArthur; Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 382

Irish Lights Steamer "Princess Alexandra."—Question, Mr. Charles Hobhouse; Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 383

Prices of Coal and Oil Purchased by Trinity House.—Question, Mr. McArthur; Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 384

Cost of Maintenance of Swans at the Nash and Penlee Point.—Question, Mr. Charles McArthur; Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 384

Cost of Maintenance of Dowsing and Brearsia Lightships and St. Catherine's and Pendun Lights.—Question, Mr. Charles McArthur; Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 384

Sale of Adulterated Whisky.—Question, Mr. J. E. Gordon (Elgin and Nairn); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 385

Royal College of Science—Scholars in Receipt of Aid from Local Education Authorities.—Question, Mr. Ernest Gray (West Ham, N.); Answer, Sir William Anson 385

Postal Service between London and Paris.—Question, Mr. Pirie (Aberdeen, N.); Answer, Lord Stanley 386

Supply of Regulation Waistcoats for Belfast Adult Post Office Messengers.—Question, Mr. Sloan (Belfast, S.); Answer, Lord Stanley 386

Halfpenny Post—Extension of Privileges.—Question, Sir Alfred Hickman (Wolverhampton, W.); Answer, Lord Stanley 387

Customs Service—Compensation for Retardation of Promotion.—Question, Mr. Ernest Gray; Answer, Mr. Victor Cavendish 387

Excise, Revenue, Estate Duty, and Income Tax, in the Dublin Collection.—Question, Mr. Nannetti (Dublin, College Green); Answer, Mr. Victor Cavendish 388

Quarantne for Imported Dogs.—Question, Mr. H. D. Greene (Shrewsbury); Answer, Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes 388

Sinking of Submarine—Grants to Widows.—Question, Mr. Reginald Lucas (Portsmouth); Answer, Mr. Pretyman 388

Tibet Mission—Expenditure in Great Britain.—Question, Mr. Herbert Roberts (Denbighshire, W.); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 389

Grievance of Royal Irish Constabulary.—Question, Mr. Charles Craig (Antrim, S.); Answer, Mr. Pretyman 389

Expenditure under Military Work and Barracks Acts.—Question, Mr. Tomkinson (Cheshire, Crewe); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 390

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QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

WAYS OF INDENTURED CHINESE LABOURERS IN THE TRANSVAAL.—Question, Mr. Ernest Grey (West Ham, N.); Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Lyttelton, Warwick and Leamington) 391

INCOME TAX DEDUCTIONS.—Question, Mr. Weir (Ross and Cromarty); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 391

METROPOLITAN EXTENSION RAILWAY.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gerald Balfour, Leeds, Central) 392

AYLESBURY CONVICT PRISON.—Question, Mr. Disraeli (Cheshire, Altrincham); Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Akers Douglas, Kent, St. Augustine's) 393

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SCIENCE—LOCAL AUTHORITIES SCHOLARSHIPS.—Question, Mr. Ernest Gray; Answer, The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education (Sir William Anson, Oxford University) 394

ISLAND OF LEWIS—SOCIAL CONDITIONS.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, The Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. Graham Murray, Buteshire) 394

UNCERTIFIED DEATHS IN SCOTLAND. — Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, Mr. A. Graham Murray 394

PUBLIC BUILDINGS—COAL AND FIREWOOD CONTRACTS.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, Lord Balcarres (Lancashire, Chorley) 395

LICENCE DUTIES—IRELAND'S EQUIVALENT GRANT.—Question, Mr. Nannetti (Dublin, College Green); Answer, The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Victor Cavendish, Derbyshire, W.) 396

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—INTERFERENCE WITH RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS.—Question, Mr. Sloan (Belfast, S.); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) 396

PAY OF ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY INSPECTORS. — Question, Mr. Reddy (King's County, Birr); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 397

TRALEE AND DINGLE RAILWAY.—Questions, Mr. Nannetti, Sir Thomas Esmonde (Wexford, N.), Mr. Thomas O'Donnell (Kerry, W.), and Mr. John Redmond (Waterford); Answers, Mr. Wyndham 397

ATHLONE GUN LICENCE.—Question, Mr. Hayden (Roscommon, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 399

CASTLEREA POLICE.—Question, Mr. Hayden; Answer, Mr. Wyndham .. 399

ESTATES IN THE LAND JUDGE'S COURT.—Questions, Mr. Ffrench (Wexford, S.); Answers, Mr. Wyndham 400

EDUCATION ACT AND RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES.—Question, Mr. Ernest Gray; Answer, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 401

ules of Procedure.—Questions, Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Lough (Islington, W.), Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis), and Mr. Corrie Grant (Warwickshire, Rugby); Answers, Mr. A. J. Balfour 402

ar Office Council.—Question, Mr. Buchanan (Perthshire, E.); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 403

he West Indian Labour Ordinances.—Questions, Sir Henry Fowler (Wolverhampton, E.); Answers, Mr. A. J. Balfour 403

he Royal Palaces Vote.—Question, Mr. Gibson Bowles; Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 404

essage from the Lords.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, " An Act for re-arranging the boundaries of the dioceses of Bristol and Gloucester and Bath and Wells." [Bishopric of Bristol Bill [Lords.]

Also a Bill, intituled, " An Act to amend the Law relating to Justices of the Peace with respect to residence, to qualification of solicitors, and to the removal of *ex officio* justices." [Justices of the Peace Bill [Lords] .. 405

ustices of the Peace Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Thursday, and to be printed. [Bill 134.] 405

Supply [25th February] Report.

my Supplementary Estimates, 1903–4.

Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [15th March], " That this House doth agree with the Committee in the Resolution, ' That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £2,700,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for Additional Expenditure, in respect of the following Army Services, viz. :—

Vote 1.—Pay, etc., of the Army- - - - - -	£2,000,000
Vote 6.—Transport and Remounts - - - - -	2,100,000
Vote 7.—Provisions, Forage, and other Supplies - -	2,030,000
Total - - -	£6,130,000
Excess Appropriations in Aid (Votes 1, 6, 7, 9, and 10) -	3,430,000
	£2,700,000

Question again proposed.

Mr. White Ridley (*Stalybridge*) 406
Colonel Legge (*St. George's, Hanover Square*) 407
Sir John Colomb (*Great Yarmouth*) 409
Mr. Gibson Bowles (*Lynn Regis*) 410

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 232; Noes, 136. (Division List No. 67.)

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WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Moved to resolve, That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, the sum of £4,256,177 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Buchanan (*Perthshire, E.*) 414

Resolved, That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, the sum of £4,256,177 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

Moved to resolve, That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1905, the sum of £39,571,200 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Gibson Bowles 415
Mr. Whitley (*Halifax*) 415
The Chancellor of the Exchequer (*Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.*) 416
Mr. Gibson Bowles 416
Mr. Courtenay Warner (*Staffordshire, Lichfield*) 416

Resolved, That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1905, the sum of £39,571,200 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

TELEGRAPH [MONEY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

The Postmaster-General (*Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton*) .. 417

Moved to resolve, That it is expedient to authorise the issue, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any sums not exceeding in the whole £3,000,000 for the purpose of the Telegraph Acts, 1863 to 1899, and to apply the provisions of The Telegraph Act, 1892, to the raising of such sums.

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Mr. McCrae (*Edinburgh, E.*) .. 418
Lord Stanley .. 418
Mr. Gibson Bowles .. 419
Lord Stanley .. 419
Mr. Caldwell (*Lanarkshire, Mid.*) .. 424
Mr. Courtenay Warner .. 425
Mr. Gibson Bowles .. 425
Mr. Henniker Heaton (*Canterbury*) .. 426
Mr. McCrae .. 427
Mr. Field (*Dublin, St. Patrick's*) .. 427
Mr. Lough .. 428
Mr. Brigg (*Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley*) .. 430
Mr. Gibson Bowles .. 430
Lord Stanley .. 430

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the issue, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any sums not exceeding in the whole £3,000,000 for the purpose of the Telegraph Acts, 1863 to 1899, and to apply the provisions of The Telegraph Act, 1892, to the raising of such sums.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

SUPPLY [23RD FEBRUARY].

Resolution reported.

VY (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATES, 1903–4.

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £1,270,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for Expenditure in respect of the following Navy Services, viz :—

Vote 8. Shipbuilding, Repairs, Maintenance, etc. :—	£
Section I. *Personnel*	53,200
Section III. Contract Work	1,254,800
	£1,308,000
Section II. *Matériel* :—	
Deduct Appropriations in Aid	38,000
	£1,720,000

Mr. Runciman (*Dewsbury*) .. 433
Colonel Denny (*Kilmarnock Burghs*) .. 434
Mr. George Brown (*Edinburgh, Central*) .. 434
Sir Fortescue Flannery (*Yorkshire, Shipley*) .. 435
The Secretary to the Admiralty (*Mr. Pretyman, Suffolk, Woodbridge*) .. 436
Mr. Whitley (*Halifax*) .. 438

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [24TH FEBRUARY].

Resolutions reported.

L SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATES, 1903–4.

CLASS I.

1. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £7,300, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for Expenditure in respect of Royal Palaces."

2. " That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £18,800, be granted to His Majesty, the defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens."

CLASS II.

3. " That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £31,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for Stationery, Printing, and Binding for the Public Service to pay the Expenses of the Stationery Office, and the Cost of Reports of Parliamentary Debates."

CLASS III.

4. " That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £2,000, be granted to His Majesty to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for certain Miscellaneous Legal Expenses."

Resolutions read a second time.

First Resolution.

Mr. Whitley 440

Amendment proposed—

" To leave out ' £7,300,' and insert ' £7,200.' "—(*Mr. Whitley*).

Question proposed, " That ' £7,300 ' stand part of the said Resolution."

Lord Balcarres (*Lancashire, Chorley*) 440
Mr. Edmund Robertson (*Dundee*) 441
Mr. Gibson Bowles 442

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 215 ; Noes, 148. (Division List No. 68.)

Resolution agreed to

Second Resolution.

Mr. Labouchere (*Northampton*) 445

Amendment proposed—

" To leave out the sum of ' £18,800,' and insert the sum of ' £18,700.' "—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

Question proposed, " That ' £18,800 ' stand part of the said Resolution."

Lord Balcarres 445
Mr. Flynn (*Cork County, N.*) 446

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution agreed to.

Third Resolution.

Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.) 446
Mr. Victor Cavendish 446
Sir Edward Strachey (Somersetshire, E.) 447

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out '£31,000,' and insert '£30,900.'"—(*Sir Edward Strachey.*)

Question proposed, "That '£31,000' stand part of the said Resolution."

Mr. Cathcart Wason (Orkney and Shetland) 448
Mr. J. H. Lewis (Flint Boroughs) 448
Mr. Victor Cavendish 448
Mr. Blake (Longford, S.) 449

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution agreed to.

Fourth Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [15TH MARCH].

Resolutions reported.

L SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATE, 1903–4.—CLASS IV.

1. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £29,400, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Expenses of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland."

ss VI.—

2. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £197,677, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for making good deficiencies on the Income Accounts of the Funds for Trustee Savings Banks, Friendly Societies, and Post Office Savings Banks."

Resolutions agreed to 449

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formatory and Industrial Schools (Scotland) Bills — [SECOND READING].—Order of the Day for Second Reading read.

The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Cochrane, Ayrshire, N.) 450

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Caldwell (Lanarkshire, Mid) 450
The Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. Graham Murray, Buteshire) .. 451
Mr. McCrae (Edinburgh, E.) 451

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Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

Metropolitan Improvements (Funds) Bill—[Second Reading]. — Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Lough (Islington, W.) 451
Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis) 452
Mr. Whitmore (Chelsea) 452
Mr. John Burns (Battersea) 453
The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Victor Cavendish, Derbyshire, W.) 453

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

And, there being no further Business set down for the Afternoon Sitting, Mr. Speaker left the Chair until this Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

Amersham, Beaconsfield, and District Water Bill (By Order)—[Second Reading.].—Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

Mr. Grenfell (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe) 454

Motion made and Question, that the Bill be now read a second time, put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

Irish Rivers (Drainage).

Mr. MacVeagh (Down, S.) 455
Mr. Kilbride (Kildare, S.) 446

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, it is the duty of the Government to at once institute a scheme for the effective drainage, dredging and improvement of the inland waterways of Ireland; and that in view of the great loss sustained, owing to floods from year to year, by owners and occupiers of property near the rivers, and the excessive taxation arising from ill-conceived schemes, this House strongly censures the Government for its persistent neglect to take steps to abate the evil."—(*Mr. MacVeagh.*)

Colonel Saunderson (Armagh, N.) 466
Mr. Hayden (Roscommon, S.) 469
Mr. Chas. Craig (Antrim, S.) 472

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Mr. O'Dowd (Sligo, S.) 474
Mr. Roche (Galway, E.) 476
The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) 478
Mr. Delany (Queen's County, Ossory) 481

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 114 ; Noes, 130. (Division List No. 69.)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—On the Motion for the Adjournment of the House.

Sir A. Acland Hood (Somersetshire, Wellington) 483

Adjourned at a quarter after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS : WEDNESDAY, 23RD MARCH, 1904.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Bishop's Stortford and District Gas Bill.—As amended, considered ; Amendments made ; Bill to be read the third time 485

Great Central and Midland Joint Railways Bill.—As amended, considered ; to be read the third time 485

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP E).

Sir ALEXANDER HARGREAVES BROWN reported from the Committee on Group E of Private Bills ; That, at the meeting of the Committee this day, a letter was received from Mr. Vaughan-Davies, one of the Members of the said Committee, stating that he was unable, on account of illness, to attend the Committee this day.
Report to lie upon the Table 485

PETITIONS.

LICENCES (RENEWAL).—Petitions against alteration of Law ; from Peckham ; Cardiff (two) ; Welshpool ; Penygraig ; Sneinton ; Streatham ; Fochriw ; Waenfaur ; Kensington Park ; Oxford ; Bentnewydd ; Llanwnda ; Gainsborough ; Rothwell ; Ramsbury ; Uffculme ; Westexe ; Northampton ; Keighley ; and Liverpool ; to lie upon the Table 485
PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE.—Petitions from Bristol, for extension to women ; to lie upon the Table 485

SALE OF BUTTER BILL.—Petition from Bournemouth, against ; to lie upon the Table 485

VACCINATION ACTS.—Petition from Derby, for repeal ; to lie upon the Table .. 485

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

IRISH IMPORTS AND EXPORTS—PUBLICATION OF STATISTICS.—Question, Mr. O'Mara (Kilkenny, S.) ; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 485

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PUBLICANS LICENCES IN IRELAND—CASE OF MR. J. BOLAND OF MALLOW.—Question, Mr. William Abraham (Cork County, N.E.); Answer Mr. Victor Cavendish 487

EXPENDITURE FOR EMPLOYMENT OF BRITISH NAVAL OFFICERS TO REPORT ON OPERATIONS OF WAR IN THE FAR EAST.—Question, Sir John Colomb (Great Yarmouth); Answer, Mr. Victor Cavendish 487

RENT AID FOR POLICE AT DEVONPORT.—Question, Mr. Kearley (Devonport); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 487

ELECTRICITY IN MINES—RULES.—Question, Mr. John Ellis (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 488

RECRUITING IN CENTRAL AFRICA OF NATIVE LABOUR FOR THE RAND.—Question, Sir Brampton Gurdon; Answer, Earl Percy 488

COLONEL BETTYS ESTATE, RATHNAGREW.—Question, Mr. Hammond (Carlow); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 489

VOLUNTEER ACTIVE SERVICE COMPANIES OFFICERS AND ARMY UNIFORM.—Question, Mr. Shaw (Stafford); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 489

ARMY DISCHARGES—CASE OF EDWARD LYNAM.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell (Longford, N.); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 490

MILITARY EXPENDITURE OF SELF-GOVERNING COLONIES.—Question, Sir Charles Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean); Answer, Mr. Lyttelton 491

OUTBREAK OF PLAGUE AMONGST NATIVES AT JOHANNESBURG.—Question, Sir Walter Foster (Derbyshire, Ilkeston); Answer, Mr. Lyttelton 491

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

ROYAL IRISH FUSILIERS—SERGEANT-MAJOR'S APPOINTMENT.—Question, Mr. Wood (Down, E.); Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Arnold-Forster, Belfast, W.); 493

LOSS OF SUBMARINE A 1.—PROVISION FOR WIDOWS AND ORPHANS.—Question, Sir John Leng (Dundee); Answer, The Civil Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. Arthur Lee, Hampshire, Fareham) 493

CROWN AGENT'S COMMISSION.—Questions, Mr. Austen Taylor (Liverpool, East Toxteth); and Mr. Bayley (Derbyshire, Chesterfield); Answers, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Lyttelton, Derbyshire, Chesterfield) .. 493

INDIA—LORD CURZON'S TERM OF OFFICE.—Qûestions, Mr. Buchanan (Perthshire, E.) and Mr. Edmund Robertson (Dundee); Answers, The Secretary of State for India (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford) 494

THE TIBETAN MISSION.—Questions, Mr. Trevelyan (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland), Mr. Weir (Ross and Cromarty), and Mr. Flynn (Cork Co., N.), Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.), and Mr. Lough (Islington, W.); Answers, Mr. Brodrick 495

BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA ADMINISTRATION.—Question, Mr. Buchanan; Answer, The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Earl Percy, Kensington, S.) 496

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INCOME TAX STATISTICS.—Question, Mr. Edmund Robertson; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.) .. 497

BELFAST VALUATION APPEALS.—Question, Mr. Sloan (Belfast, S.); Answer, The Attorney-General for Ireland (Mr. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.) .. 497

Irish National Schools—Teachers' Residue Grant.—Question, Mr. Sloan; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) 498

ART AND SCIENCE INSTRUCTION IN IRELAND—SALARIES OF STAFF.—Question, Mr. Nannetti (Dublin, College Green); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 498

BLARIS BURIAL GROUND—CARETAKER'S HOUSE.—Question, Mr. Wood (Down, E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 498

SHAWS BRIDGE POLICE BARRACKS, COUNTY DOWN.—Question, Mr. Wood; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 499

GRANARD WORKHOUSE MASTER'S PENSION.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell (Longford, N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 499

COUNTY LONGFORD DRAINAGE BOARDS.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 500

EVICTED TENANTS IN COUNTY LONGFORD.—Questions, Mr. J. P. Farrell and Mr. Murphy (Kerry, E.); Answers, Mr. Wyndham 500

DEAN REEVE'S ESTATE, SKIBBEREEN.—Question, Mr. Edward Barry (Cork County, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 501

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY.—Questions, Mr. Nannetti and Mr. Delany (Queen's County, Ossory); Answers, Mr. Wyndham 501

IRISH POLICE AND THE PRESS.—Question, Mr. Duffy (Galway, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 502

BELFAST TOWN POSTMEN—DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS.—Question, Mr. Sloan; Answer, The Postmaster-General (Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton) 503

SKIBBEREEN POST OFFICE.—Question, Mr. Edward Barry; Answer, Lord Stanley 503

REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS.—Questions, Mr. D. A. Thomas (Merthyr Tydvil); Answers, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 504

GOVERNMENT LICENSING BILL.—Question, Sir Wilfrid Lawson (Cornwall, Camborne); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 504

OUTDOOR RELIEF (FRIENDLY SOCIETIES) BILL.—Questions, Sir Edward Strachey (Somersetshire, E.), and Sir William Tomlinson (Preston); Answers, Mr. A. J. Balfour 504

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POLICE (SUPERANNUATION) BILL. [SECOND READING.]

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Caldwell (Lanarkshire, Mid) 506
Sir John Dorington (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) 509
Sir Robert Reid (Dumfries Burghs) 510
Mr. Spear (Devonshire, Tavistock) 510
The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Cochrane, Ayrshire, N.) 511
Mr. Lough (Islington, W.) 515
Sir Albert Rollit (Islington, S.) 517
Sir Howard Vincent (Sheffield, Central) 517
Mr. Edmund Robertson (Dundee) 519
Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton) 522
Mr. Helme (Lancashire, Lancaster) 523
Mr. Heywood Johnstone (Sussex, Horsham) 523

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.

WAYS AND MEANS (22nd MARCH).

Resolutions reported.

"That towards making good the supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, the sum of £4,256,177 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

"That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1905, the sum of £39,571,200 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

Resolutions agreed to. Bill ordered to be brought in by the Chairman of Ways and Means, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Victor Cavendish 524

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill.—"To apply certain sums out of the Consolidated Fund to the service of the years ending on the 31st day of March, 1904 and 1905," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time to-morrow 524

TELEGRAPH [MONEY.]

Resolution reported.

"That it is expedient to authorise the issue, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any sums not exceeding in the whole £3,000,000, for the purpose of the Telegraph Acts, 1863 to 1899, and to apply the provisions of the Telegraph Act, 1892, to the raising of such sums."

Mr. O'Mara (*Kilkenny, S.*) .. 525
Mr. William Redmond (*Clare, E.*) .. 525
Mr. J. P. Farrell (*Longford, N.*) .. 526
Mr. Lough (*Islington, W.*) .. 526
Mr. Malcolm (*Suffolk, Stowmarket*) .. 527
The Postmaster-General (*Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton*) .. 528
Mr. Dalziel (*Kirkcaldy Burghs*) .. 529
Mr. Alexander Cross (*Glasgow, Camlachie*) .. 530
Sir George Bartley (*Islington, N.*) .. 531

Bill ordered to be brought in by Lord Stanley, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Victor Cavendish.

Telegraph (Money) Bill.—"To provide for raising further money for the purpose of the Telegraph Acts, 1863 to 1899," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 135.]

Metropolitan Improvements (Funds) Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Clause 1.

Mr. Dalziel (*Kirkcaldy Burghs*) .. 532

Amendment proposed—

"In Clause 1 to leave out the word 'Treasury' and insert the word 'Parliament.'" (*Mr. Dalziel*).

Question proposed, "That the word 'Treasury' stand part of the clause."

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (*Mr. Victor Cavendish, Derbyshire, W.*) .. 533

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill reported without Amendment.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

Electric Lighting (London) Bill.—[SECOND READING.]

Order of the day for the Second Reading, read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

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Mr. Caldwell (Lanarkshire, Mid) 533
The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gerald Balfour, Leeds, Central) .. 535
Mr. Brigg (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley) 536
Mr. Dalziel (Kirkcaldy Burghs) 536
Mr. John Burns (Battersea) 537
Mr. Cust (Southwark, Bermondsey) 538
Sir Walter Foster (Derbyshire, Ilkeston) 538

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed to a Select Committee of Five Members. Three to be nominated by the House, and Two by the Committee of Selection.

Ordered, That all Petitions against the Bill presented three clear days before the meeting of the Committee be referred to the Committee; that the Petitioners praying to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, or Agents, be heard against the Bill, and Counsel heard in support of the Bill.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. Gerald Balfour.*)

Dog Bill.—[SECOND READING].—Order for Seonding Reading read.

Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey) 540

Motion made and Question proposed, " That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Bayley (Derbyshire, Chesterfield) 542

Amendment proposed—

" To leave out the word ' now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words ' upon this day six months.' "—(*Mr. Bayley.*)

Question proposed, " That the word ' now ' stand part of the Question."

Mr. O'Mara (Kilkenny, S.) 543
Sir J. Fergusson (Manchester, N.E.) 544
Mr. Black (Banffshire) 545
Sir Frederick Banbury (Camberwell, Peckham) 546
Sir Charles Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) 546
Sir Mark Stewart (Kirkcudbrightshire) 547
Mr. Broadhurst (Leicester) 547
Mr. Whitmore (Chelsea) 548
Mr. Crombie (Kincardineshire) 549
Mr. Spear (Devonshire, Tavistock) 549
The Solicitor-General (Sir Edward Carson, Dublin University) .. 550
Mr. Cathcart Wason (Orkney and Shetland) 550

And, it being half-past seven of the clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed to-morrow.

EVENING SITTING.

Barnet District Gas and Water Bill (By Order).—[Second Reading].—Order for Seconding Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Hudson (Hertfordshire, Hitchin) 551
Mr. Cohen (Islington, E.) 552
Mr. Bamford (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) 552

Bill read a second time, and committed.

Government Departments (Wages).

Mr. Shackleton (Lancashire, Chitheroe) 553
Captain Norton (Newington, W.) 556

Motion made and Question proposed, "That this House is of opinion that the wages paid to the unskilled workers in Government factories and shipyards should be not less than the standard rate of wages paid for similar work in other employments in the respective districts."—(*Mr. Shackleton.*)

Sir John Gorst (Cambridge University) 558
Mr. Sydney Buxton (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) 559
The Financial Secretary of the Treasury (Mr. Victor Cavendish, Derbyshire, N.) 562
Mr. Crooks (Woolwich) 564
Mr. Kearley (Devonport) 567
Mr. Platt-Higgins (Salford, N.) 568
Mr. John Burns (Battersea) 568
Mr. Nannetti (Dublin, College Green) 572
Mr. Reginald Lucas (Portsmouth) 573
Mr. Ernest Gray (West Ham, N.) 574
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 576

And, it being Midnight, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed to-morrow.

Adjourned at two minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: THURSDAY, 24TH MARCH, 1904.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with:—South-Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway (Extension of Time).

And also the Certificate that the further proofs required by the Standing Orders Committee in respect of the following Bill have been given:—

Bristol Tramways (Extensions [H.L.].

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 581

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RICHARD JAEGER'S PATENT.—Petition of Henry Ernest Victor Baron de Barreto, praying for leave to introduce a Bill for rendering valid certain Letters Patent granted to Richard Jaeger in respect of an invention for an improved process for the dry slaking of lime, and apparatus therefor; together with a copy of the proposed Bill annexed thereto; read, and referred to the Examiners .. 581

Victoria University of Manchester Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments 581

North Wales Electric Power Bill [H.L.]; Bristol Tramways (Extensions) Bill [H.L.]. Read 2^a, and committed. The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 581

Great Northern and City Railway (Extension of Time) Bill.—Read 2^a, and committed 581

Maidenhead Bridge Bill [H.L.]; Liverpool and Wigan Churches Bill [H.L.]; Weaver Navigation (Additional Finance) Bill [H.L.]; Weaver Navigation (Constitution and Finance) Bill [H.L.]; Neath, Pontardawe, and Brynaman Railway Bill [H.L.]; Barry Railway (Steam Vessels) Bill [H.L.]; Cardiff Railway Bill [H.L.]; Great Western Railway Bill [H.L.]; Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; viz.:—

E. Kimberley,
L. Sinclair,
L. Bateman,
L. O'Hagan,
L. Newton (*Chairman*).

agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly. The Committee to meet on Tuesday the 26th of April next at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills 581

Felixstowe Gas Bill; Gomersal Gas Gill; Kettering Improvement Bill; Norwich Water Bill. Brought from the Commons; read 1^a; and referred to the Examiners 582

Milwr and District Mines Drainage Bill [H.L.].—The King's consent signified; and Bill reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments .. 582

Preston and Blackburn Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 582

Metropolitan Common Scheme (Farnborough) Provincial Order Bill.—Brought from the Commons; read 1^a; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 41.) 582

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

No. 3128. Russia (Odessa and district).

No. 3129. Germany (Estimates for 1904).

No. 3130. Nantes and district 582

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Page

AFRICA, No. 4 (1904).—Correspondence relating to the recruitment of labour in the British Central Africa Protectorate for employment in the Transvaal (in continuation of "Africa, No. 2 (1903)")... 582

WEST INDIES.—Return of the exports of sugar and fruit from the British West Indies to England, Canada, and to all other countries, for the years 1899–1900, and 1902-1903. Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 583

NATIONAL DEBT ANNUITIES.—Account of the gross amount of all bank annuities, and any annuities for terms of years, transferred, and of all sums of money paid to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt, and the gross amount of annuities for lives and for terms of years which have been granted for the same, and contracts for payments on death which have been made within the year ended 5th January, 1904. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 583

Sea Fisheries Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Select Committee (with the Proceedings of the Committee and Appendix), made, and to be printed. (No. 36.) Minutes of Evidence laid upon the Table, and to be delivered out. Bill reported, with an Amendment, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House; and to be printed as amended. (No. 37.) 583

NEW BILLS.

Outdoor Relief (Friendly Societies) Bill [H.L.].—A Bill to amend the Outdoor Relief (Friendly Societies) Act, 1894, was presented by the Lord Monkswell; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Thursday the 21st of April next. (No. 38.) 583

Open Spaces Bill [H.L.].—A Bill to consolidate enactments relating to open spaces, was presented by the Lord Tweedmouth (for the Earl of Onslow); read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 39.) 583

Site for Duke of York's School Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order); and Amendments proposed by the Chairman of Committee's Committee made.

Moved, "That the Standing Committee be negatived."—(*Lord Windsor.*)

The Acting Chairman of Committees (*Lord Balfour of Burleigh*) .. 584

On Question, Standing Committee negatived; the Report of Amendments to be received to-morrow.

Sale of Intoxicants to Children Bill [H.L.]. [SECOND READING].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Lord Dunboyne 584

Moved, That the Bill be now read 2ª.—(*Lord Dunboyne.*)

The Lord Chancellor (*The Earl of Halsbury*) 586

The Lord Bishop of London 587

On Question, Bill read 2ª, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday, the 21st April next.

Wild Birds Protection Acts Amendment Bill. [THIRD READING.]—Bill read 3^a (according to Order), with the Amendments.

The Earl of Wemyss. 587

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, Clause 1, line 7, to leave out from the word 'instrument' to the word 'any' in line 8, and to insert the words 'which does not instantaneously kill.'"—(*The Earl of Wemyss*).

The Marquess of Granby 589
Lord Tweedmouth 590
The Earl of Kimberley 590

On Question, Amendment negatived.

Moved, That the Bill do pass.—(*The Marquess of Granby.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

Bill passed, and returned to the Commons.

Naval Prize Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order). Bill reported without Amendment. Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3^a To-morrow 592

Metropolitan Improvements (Funds) Bill.—Brought from the Commons. Read 1^a; to be printed; and to be read 2^a To-morrow. (No. 40.) .. 592

House adjourned at five minutes past Five o'clock, till To-morrow. half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: THURSDAY, 24TH MARCH, 1904.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH.)—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz.:—Weston-super-Mare Grand Pier Bill [Lords]. Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time 592

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (COMPLIANCE WITH PROOFS REQUIRED BY STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, examined pursuant to the Resolution of the Select Committee on Standing Orders agreed to by the House on the 22nd day of March, compliance with the further proofs required by the Select Committee on Standing Orders has been proved, viz.:—Bristol Tramways (Extensions) Bill [Lords] 592

hippenham Gas Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 593

reat Eastern Railway Bill (KING'S CONSENT SIGNIFIED).—Read the third time, and passed 593

irkby-in-Ashfield Urban District Gas Bill; Sheppy Gas Bill; Torquay Tramways Bill; Wellington (Somerset) Gas Bill. Read the third time, and passed 593

t. Marylebone Electric Lighting Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 593

RIVATE BILLS (GROUP E).—Sir ALEXANDER H. BROWN reported from the Committee on Group E of Private Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, they had adjourned till Thursday, 14th April, at Two of the Clock. Report to lie upon the Table 593

ELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Mr. HALSEY reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had added to the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing ing), Shipping, and Manufactures, the following fifteen Members in respect of the Railways (Private Sidings) Bill:—Sir John Brunner, Sir Frederick Banbury, Mr. Alexander Cross, Mr. Cripps, Mr. Bell, Mr. Black, Mr. Field, Mr. Kerr, Mr. Parrott, Sir Joseph Dimsdale, Colonel Lockwood, Mr. Reginald Lucas, Mr. Stroyan, Mr. Ure, and Mr. Osmond Williams.

Mr. HALSEY further reported; That they had added to the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure the following fifteen Members in respect of the Hall-Marking of Foreign Plate Bill:—Mr. Norman, Mr. Caldwell, Mr. Bathurst, Sir James Joicey, Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, Mr. Langley, Mr. Schwann, Mr. Henderson, Mr. Lowe, Mr. Bull, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Mr. Charles Murray, Mr. Bonar Law, Colonel Denny, and Mr. Massey-Mainwaring.

Mr. HALSEY further reported; That they had added to the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, the following fifteen Members in repsect of the Savings Banks Acts Amendment Bill:—Sir Frederick Banbury, Sir James Woodhouse, Mr. Broadhurst, Sir Brampton Gurdon, Sir William Holland, Mr. O'Shaughnessy, Sir George Bartley, Mr. Edmund Faber, Mr. William Lawrence, Sir James Haslett, Sir Samuel Hoare, Mr. John Johnson, Sir George Fardell, Mr. Hayes Fisher, and Mr. Yoxall.

Mr. HALSEY further reported; That they had added to the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufacturers, the following fifteen Members in respect of the Police (Superannuation) Bill:—Sir Robert Reid, Mr. Spear, Sir Howard Vincent, Mr. Edmund Robertson, Mr. Hay, Mr. Helme, Mr. Heywood Johnstone, Mr. Ainsworth, Mr. John Hutton, Colonel Stopford-Sackville, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Thomas Bayley, Mr. Tomkinson, Captain Bagot, and Mr. Hudson 593

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That they have agreed to—Wild Birds Protection Acts Amendment Bill, with Amendments.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the Law relating to the Prevention of Cruelty to Children." [Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Amendment) Bill [Lords].]

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Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confer further powers on the Tynemouth Gas Company." [Tynemouth Gas Bill [Lords].]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Preston, Chorley, and Horwich Tramways Company to construct works; and for other purposes." [Preston, Chorley, and Horwich Tramways Bill [Lords].] .. 594

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Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Amendment) Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 139.] 643

NEW BILLS.

Steam Engines and Boilers (Persons in Charge) Bill.—"To grant certificates to Persons in Charge of Steam Engines and Boilers," presented by Mr. John Johnson; supported by Mr. John Wilson (Durham), Mr. Cameron, Mr. Levy, Mr. Jacoby, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Paulton, and Mr. Bell; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 13th April, and to be printed. [Bill 138.] 643

Bishoprics of Southwark and Birmingham Bill.—"To provide for the foundation of Bishoprics of Southwark and Birmingham, and for matters incidental thereto," presented by Mr. A. J. Balfour; supported by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas and Mr. Attorney-General; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 13th April, and to be printed. [Bill 136.) 643

Business of the House (Supply).—Ordered, That the proceedings on the Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill and on the Telegraph (Money) Bill have precedence this day of the Committee of Supply.—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*) .. 644

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill. [Second Reading.]—Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Sir Walter Foster (Derbyshire, Ilkeston) 644
Mr. Joseph Walton (Yorkshire, W.R., Barnsley) 648
Dr. Hutchinson (Sussex, Rye) 653
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Lyttelton, Warwick and Leamington) 655
Sir E. Durning Lawrence (Cornwall, Truro) 657
Mr. Lloyd-George (Carnarvon Boroughs) 658
Dr. Macnamara (Camberwell, N.) 662
Mr. Herbert Samuel (Yorkshire, Cleveland) 664
Colonel Kenyon-Slaney (Shropshire, Newport) 665
Sir Robert Reid (Dumfries Burghs) 667
Mr. Lyttelton 669
Mr. John Redmond (Waterford) 676
Mr. T. W. Russell (Tyrone, S.) 681
Mr. Roche (Galway, E.) 683
Mr. Hemphill (Tyrone, N.) 685

Colonel Saunderson (*Armagh, N.*) 687
Mr. Hugh Law (*Donegal, W.*) 689
The Chief Secretary for Ireland (*Mr. Wyndham, Dover*) 690
Mr. Thomas O'Donnell (*Kerry, W.*) 696
Mr. Kilbride (*Kildare, S.*) 698

And, it being half-past seven of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till this Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

London County Council (**Tramways and Improvements**) **Bill** (**By Order**).

Sir Frederick Banbury (*Camberwell, Peckham*) 698
Mr. Whitmore (*Chelsea*) 702

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill to omit Tramway No. 2."—(*Sir Frederick Banbury.*)

Captain Norton (*Newington, W.*) 702
Mr. Cohen (*Islington, W.*) 705
Dr. Macnamara (*Camberwell, N.*) 706
Mr. William Rutherford (*Liverpool, West Derby*) 708
Mr. Burdett-Coutts (*Westminster*) 710
Mr. John Burns (*Battersea*) 712
Sir George Bartley (*Islington, N.*) 715

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 159 ; Noes, 131. (Division List No. 70.)

Motion made and Question put, "That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill to omit Tramway No. 2A."—(*Mr. Whitmore.*)

The House divided :—Ayes, 161 ; Noes, 123. (Division List No. 71.)

Telegraph (**Money**) **Bill**. (SECOND READING.)—Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. J. H. Lewis (*Flint Boroughs*) 721
The Postmaster-General (*Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton*) .. 724

Bill read a second time and committed for Monday next.

Consolidated Fund (**No. 1**) **Bill**. [SECOND READING].—Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [24th March], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

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Mr. Kilbride 724
Mr. Wyndham 725
Mr. Flynn (*Cork County, N.*) 728
The Attorney-General for Ireland (*Mr. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.*) .. 729
Mr. Weir (*Ross and Cromarty*) 732
The Lord Advocate (*Mr. Scott Dickson, Glasgow, Bridgeton*) 734
Mr. Markham (*Nottinghamshire, Mansfield*) 734

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 139 ; Noes, 39. (Division List No. 72.)

Bill accordingly read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

Adjourned at twenty minutes after One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS, FRIDAY, 25TH MARCH, 1904.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Southport and Lytham Tramroad (Extension of Time) Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments 737

Barrow-in-Furness Corporation Bill [H.L.]—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 737

Chesterfield Corporation (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 737

Corbridge Gas Bill; Great Eastern Railway (Steamboats) Bill; South-Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway (Extension of Time) Bill. Read 2^{a}, and committed 737

Matlock and District Gas Bill [H.L.]; Tynemouth Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Metropolitan Railway Bill [H.L.]; Cambrian Railways Bill [H.L.]; York Town and Blackwater Gas Bill [H.L.]; West Metropolitan Railway (Abandonment) Bill [H.L.]; Nuneaton and Chilvers Coton Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]; Ticehurst and District Water and Gas Bill [H.L.]; Tyneside Tramways and Tramroads Bill [H.L.]. Read 3^{a}, and passed, and sent to the Commons 737

Southend Water Bill.—Read 3^{a}, with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons 737

Chippenham Gas Bill; Great Eastern Railway Bill; Kirkby-in-Ashfield Urban District Gas Bill; Sheppy Gas Bill; Torquay Tramways Bill; Wellington (Somerset) Gas Bill; Bexhill Water and Gas Bill; North Staffordshire Railway Bill. Brought from the Commons; read 1^{a}; and referred to the Examiners 737

Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills.

Ordered, That Standing Orders Nos. 92 and 93 be suspended; and that the time for depositing petitions praying to be heard against Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills, also the time for depositing Documents relating to any Order under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, which would otherwise expire during the adjournment of the House at Easter, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the Recess 737

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

ARMY.—General Annual Return of the British Army, January to September, 1903 738

WAR OFFICE.—Report of the War Office (Reconstitution) Committee, Part III. 738

BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES (ENGLAND AND WALES).—Sixty-fifth Annual Report of the Registrar-General.
Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 738

LAND TRANSFER ACTS.—Land Transfer Rules, dated 18th December, 1903, made in pursuance of Section 111 of the Land Transfer Act, 1875, and Section 22 of the Land Transfer Act, 1897. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 738

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

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Site for Duke of York's School Bill [H.L.]. Amendments reported (according to order). Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next; and to be printed as amended. (No. 42.) 738

Naval Prize Bill [H.L.]. Read 3ª (according to order); Amendments made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons 738

Metropolitan Improvements (Funds) Bill. Read 2ª (according to order); Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next .. 738

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Five o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: FRIDAY, 25TH MARCH, 1904.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz.:—New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company Bill [Lords]. Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time 739

Bexhill Water and Gas Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 739

North Staffordshire Railway Bill (King's Consent signified).—Read the third time, and passed 739

Croydon Gas Bill; Great Northern Railway Bill; London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway Bill; Ryde Gas Bill; Southend-on-Sea Gas Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time 739

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Local Government Provisional Orders (No.1). Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Ashton-in-Makerfield, Brighton, Manchester, Nelson, Scarborough, and Sunderland. Ordered to be brought in by Mr. Grant Lawson and Mr. Walter Long.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.—" To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Ashton-in-Makerfield, Brighton, Manchester, Nelson, Scarborough, and Sunderland," presented accordingly, and read the first time ; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 140.] 739

Colney Hatch Gas Bill ; London and North Western Railway Bill ; Midland Railway Bill. Reported, with Amendments ; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 740

Acton Improvement Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from the Police and Sanitary Committee [Costs awarded] ; Report to lie upon the Table and to be printed 740

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to—Southend Water Bill, with Amendments.

Also, a Bill, intituled, " An Act for incorporating and conferring powers upon the Matlock and District Gas Company ; and for other purposes." [Matlock and District Gas Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, " An Act to increase the number of the wards and of the Council of the Borough of Tynemouth ; and for other purposes." [Tynemouth Corporation Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, " An Act to authorise the Metropolitan Railway Company to convert and consolidate their existing capital ; to raise additional capital ; and for other purposes." [Metropolitan Railway Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, " An act for amalgamating the Mid-Wales Railway Company with the Cambrian Railways Company ; for conferring further powers upon the last named company ; and for other purposes." [Cambrian Railways Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, " An Act for incorporating and conferring powers on the York Town and Blackwater Gas Company ; and for other purposes." [York Town and Blackwater Gas Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled,"An Act for the abandonment of the West Metropolitan Railway ; and for other purposes." [West Metropolitan Railway (Abandonment) Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, " An Act to authorise the Urban District Council of Nuneaton and Chilvers Coton to construct works for prevention of floods on the River Anker within the urban district of Nuneaton and Chilvers Coton and the rural district of Nuneaton, in the county of Warwick ; and for other purposes." [Nuneaton and Chilvers Coton Urban District Council Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, " An Act for amalgamating the undertakings of the Ticehurst and Robertsbridge Water Company and the Wadhurst, Ticehurst, and District Gas Light and Coke Company, for extending their limits of supply, for authorising the construction of works, and the raising of additional capital; and for other purposes." [Ticehurst and District Water and Gas Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confer further powers upon the Tyneside Tramways and Tramroads Company with respect to the construction and maintenance of works and the acquisition of lands; and for other purposes." [Tyneside Tramways and Tramroads Bill [Lords.] 741

Matlock and District Gas Bill [Lords].—Tynemouth Corporation Bill [Lords]; Metropolitan Railway Bill [Lords]; Cambrian Railways Bill [Lords]; York Town and Blackwater Gas Bill [Lords]; West Metropolitan Railway (Abandonment) Bill [Lords]; Nuneaton and Chilvers Coton Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; Ticehurst and District Water and Gas Bill [Lords]; Tyneside Tramways and Tramroads Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 741

PETITIONS.

Licences (Renewal).—Petitions against alteration of Law; from Broadwey and Upwey; Newlyn; Lancaster; Hackney; Birkenhead; Conway; Tunbridge Wells; Hunslet; Morecambe; Walthamstow; Ilford; Barnsley (two); Blackpool; Roxwell; Highgate; Ardingly; Ashford; Cricklewood; Edgware; and Crediton; to lie upon the Table 742

le of Butter Bill.—Petitions against; from Hednesford; and Nottingham; to lie upon the Table 742

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

rmy.—Copy presented, of General Annual Return of the British Army for January to September, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 742

Public Accounts (Army Votes).—Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 21st March, 1904, under the Appropriation Act, 1903, authorising the temporary application of Surpluses on certain Army Votes for the year 1903–4 to defray excesses on other Army Votes for the same year [pursuant to Resolution of the House of 4th March, 1879]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 112.] 742

Births, Deaths, and Marriages (England).—Copy presented, of Sixty-fifth Annual Report of the Registrar-General, 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 742

Message from the Lords.—That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to consolidate, with Amendments, the Enactments relating to Naval Prize of War." [Naval Prize Bill [Lords.] 742

New Writ.—New writ for the County of the Isle of Wight, in the room of Major John Edward Bernard Seely (Chiltern Hundreds).—(*Sir A. Acland-Hood.*) 742

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

CERTIFIED AND UNCERTIFIED DEATHS IN ENGLAND AND WALES.—Question, Sir Walter Foster (Derbyshire, Ilkeston); Answer, Mr. Walter Long .. 743

POSTAL FACILITIES IN COUNTY DONEGAL.—Question, Mr. Hugh Law (Donegal, W.); Answer, Lord Stanley 743

COST OF EDUCATING CHILDREN FROM OTHER DISTRICTS SENT TO CORSTORPHINE (MIDLOTHIAN).—Question, The Master of Elibank (Edinburgh, Midlothian); Answer, Mr. A. Graham Murray 745

ANTRIM LUNATIC ASYLUM CLOTHING CONTRACTS—ALLEGED MONOPOLY.—Question, Mr. Sloan (Belfast, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 745

BETTING OFFICES IN IRELAND.—Question, Mr. Sloan; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 746

LISBURN RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL—SITE FOR LABOURER'S COTTAGE.—Question, Mr. Sloan; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 746

DELAY IN ERECTION OF SCHOOL TEACHER'S HOUSE AT LEAMLARA, COUNTY CORK.—Question, Captain Donelan (Cork County, E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 747

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN OF INDIAN LABOURERS IMPORTED INTO BRITISH COLONIES.—Question, Sir Mancherjee Bhownaggree (Bethnal Green, N.E.); Answer, Mr. Lyttelton 747

BRITISH INDIANS AND CHINESE LABOUR ORDINANCE.—Question, Sir Mancherjee Bhownaggree; Answer, Mr. Lyttelton 748

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE OF TRANSVAAL AND ORANGE RIVER COLONIES.—Question, Mr. Lambert (Devonshire, S. Molton); Answer, Mr. Lyttelton 749

EXPENDITURE FROM TRANSVAAL LOAN.—Question, Mr. Lambert; Answer, Mr. Lyttelton 749

Private Legislation Procedure (Wales) Bill [SECOND READING].—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Brynmor Jones (*Swansea District*) 750

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Colonel Wyndham Quin (*Glamorganshire, S.*) 754
Mr. Henry Hobhouse (*Somersetshire, E.*) 755
Colonel Kenyon-Slaney (*Shropshire, Newport*) 757

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'That' to the end of the Question, and add the words 'this House, while recognising that further devolution of its powers in connection with Private Bill Legislation may be desirable, considers that such devolution should be preceded by a full inquiry into the manner in which The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, has worked, and the extent to which it is capable of application to the rest of the United Kingdom.'"—(*Mr. Henry Hobhouse.*)

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Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. Stuart Wortley (Sheffield, Hallam) 763
Mr. J. H. Lewis (Flint Boroughs) 765
Colonel Pryce Jones (Montgomery Boroughs) 771
Mr. Eugene Wason (Clackmannan and Kinross) 772
Mr. Edwards (Radnor) 773
Sir Joseph Lawrence (Monmouth Boroughs) 775
Mr. Thomas Shaw (Hawick Burghs) 776
Mr. William Jones (Carnarvonshire, Arfon) 778
Sir Samuel Hoare (Norwich) 779
Mr. Munro Ferguson (Leith Burghs) 781
The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Walter Long, Bristol, S.) 782
Mr. Lloyd-George (Carnarvon Boroughs) 791

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Select Committee.

hops Bill.—[Second Reading].—Order for Second Reading read.

Sir Charles Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) 794

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Sir Francis Powell (Wigan) 800
Sir Frederick Banbury (Camberwell, Peckham) 802

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Sir Francis Powell.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Debate arising,

And, it being half-past Five of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Friday, 10th June.

onsolidated Fund (No. 1 Bill).—Considered in Committee, and reported without Amendment; to be read the third time upon Monday next 803

Vild Birds Protection Acts Amendment Bill.—Lords' Amendments to be considered forthwith; considered, and agreed to 803

HE EASTER RECESS.—Questions, Mr. Lough (Islington, W.), Mr. Swift MacNeill (Donegal, S.), Mr. Sydney Buxton (Tower Hamlets, Poplar), and Mr. John Redmond (Waterford); Answers, Sir A. Acland-Hood 803

Adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Six o'clock till Monday next.

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HOUSE OF LORDS : MONDAY, 28TH MARCH, 1904.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with :—South Shields Gas ; Kettering Improvement ; Littlestone-on-Sea and District Water 805

And also the Certificates that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with :—Metropolitan Common Scheme (Farnborough) Provisional Order ; Metropolitan Common Scheme (Hillingdon East) Provisional Order. The same were ordered to lie on the Table 805

Weaver Navigation (Additional Finance) Bill [H.L.].—The LORD CHANCELLOR informed the House that the promoters do not intend to proceed further with the Bill. The orders made on the 19th of February and Thursday last discharged.
Ordered, That the Bill be not further proceeded with. 805

Weaver Navigation (Constitution and Finance) Bill [H.L.].—The LORD CHANCELLOR informed the House that the promoters do not intend to proceed further with the Bill. The orders made on the 19th of February and Thursday last discharged.
Ordered, That the Bill be not further proceeded with 805

New River Company Bill [H.L.]; Victoria University of Yorkshire Bill [H.L.], now University of Leeds Bill [H.L.] ; Huddersfield Corporation Act, 1902 (Amendment), Bill [H.L.] ; Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company Bill [H.L.] ; Gosport Water Bill [H.L.] ; Victoria University of Manchester Bill [H.L.]. Read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons .. 805

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).—No. 3131. Argentine Republic (Finances) ; No. 3132. Western Pacific (Samoa). Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 806

LOCOMOTIVES ON HIGHWAYS ACT, 1896, AND MOTOR CAR ACT, 1903.—Regulations of Local Government Board as to registration and licensing of motor cars under Section 6 of the Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896, and Section 7 of the Motor Car Act, 1903 806

MOTOR CAR ACTS.—Regulations as to use and construction of motor cars made by the Local Government Board under Section 6 of the Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896 806

GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL (RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE).—Returns of the receipts and expenditure of the General Medical Council and of the Branch Councils, also of receipts and expenditure of the Dental Registration Fund, for the year ended 31st December, 1903 806

SUPERANNUATION.—Treasury Minute, dated 24th March, 1904, granted a retired allowance to Thomas G. Stuart-French, Upper Division Clerk, Secretary's Office, Post Office, under Section 2 of the Superannuation Act, 1887 .. 806

Penal Servitude Acts, 1853 to 1891 (Conditional Licence).—Licence granted by His Majesty to Emma Mary Agnes West, a convict under detention in Aylesbury Prison, permitting her to be at large on condition that she enter the East End Refuge, Finchley, N.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table .. 806

Business of the House.—Standing Order No. XXXIX. considered (according to order), and suspended for this day's sitting 806

Site for Duke of York's School Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a (according to order); Amendments made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons 807

Metropolitan Improvements (Funds) Bill.–Read 3^a (according to order), and passed 807

Business of the House.—Standing Order No. XXXIX. to be considered To-morrow in order to its being suspended for that day's sitting 807

House adjourned during pleasure.

House resumed by the Earl Waldegrave

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill.—Brought from the Commons; read 1^a. Then (Standing Order No. XXXIX. having been suspended) Bill read 2^a—(*The Lord Windsor*). Committee negatived. Bill read 3^a, and passed .. 807

House adjourned at ten minutes past Twelve o'clock a.m. till Three o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS : MONDAY, 28TH MARCH, 1904.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Private Bills [Lords] (Standing Orders not previously inquired into complied with).—Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, having been complied with, viz.:—Barry Railway (Extension of Time, etc.) Bill [Lords]; Ipswich Dock Commission Bill [Lords]; Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Bill [Lords]; Tynemouth Gas Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time 807

Bishop's Stortford and District Gas Bill.—Verbal Amendments made; Bill read the third time, and passed 808

Great Central and Midland Joint Railways Bill; Sutton Gas Bill. Read the third time, and passed 808

Birkdale Improvement Bill; Soothill Nether Urban District Tramways Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time 808

Appleby Corporation Gas Bill [Lords]; Govan Burgh (Electricity) Bill [Lords]; London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Bill [Lords]; Young and Bell's Patents Bill [Lords]. Read a second time, and committed 808

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Brixham Gas Bill (BY ORDER).—As amended, considered; an Amendment made; Bill to be read the third time 808

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 1).—Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade, under the Electric Lighting Acts 1882 and 1888, relating to Barry, Clitheroe, Gainsborough, Glastonbury, Heysham, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Saffron Walden, Walmer, Whickham, and Yardley, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.—"To confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade, under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Barry, Clitheroe, Gainsborough, Glastonbury, Heysham, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Saffron Walden, Walmer, Whickham, and Yardley," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 141] .. 808

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP NO. 1).—Mr. KIMBER reported from the Committee on Group No. 1 of Railway Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Thursday, 14th April, at half-past Eleven of the Clock.

Report to lie upon the Table 808

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.—Fourth Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 808

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have agreed to—

Metropolitan Improvements (Funds) Bill, without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act for extinguishing certain rights of way over certain lands situate in the parish of Guston, in the county of Kent." [Site for Duke of York's School Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to make provision for the application and distribution of the water stock issued to the New River Company in discharge of the sum payable as compensation for the transfer of their water undertaking to the Metropolitan Water Board, for the reconstruction of the company and its registration as a limited company; and for other purposes." [New River Company Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to merge the Yorkshire College in the University of Leeds; and to transfer all the property and liabilities of the Yorkshire College to the University to Leeds; and for other purposes." [University of Leeds Bill [Lords], changed from "Victoria University of Yorkshire Bill [Lords.]"

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the Huddersfield Corporation Act, 1902; and for other purposes." [Huddersfield Corporation Act, 1902 (Amendment) Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to make provision with reference to the registration under the Companies Acts, 1862 to 1900, of the Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company, and the substitution of a memorandum and articles of association for their existing constitution and regulations, and for the repeal of certain Acts relating to such Company; and for other purposes." [Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Gosport Waterworks Company to make additional waterworks; to acquire the undertaking of the Lee-on-the-Solent Waterworks Company, Limited, and to raise additional capital; to extend the limits of supply of the Company; to confer further powers upon the Company; and for other purposes." [Gosport Water Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to incorporate the Owens College, Manchester, with the Victoria University of Manchester; and to transfer all the property and liabilities of the college to the Victoria University of Manchester; and for other purposes." [Victoria University of Manchester Bill [Lords.] 809

New River Company Bill [Lords]; University of Leeds Bill [Lords]; Huddersfield Corporation Act, 1902 (Amendment) Bill [Lords]; Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company Bill [Lords]:; Gosport Water Bill [Lords]; Victoria University of Manchester Bill [Lords]. Read the first time, and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 810

PETITIONS.

Licences (Renewal).—Petitions against alteration of law: from Exeter; Leeds; Liverpool (two); Bristol (two); Bury; Market Drayton; Chelmsford; and Finchley; to lie upon the Table 810

Sale of Butter Bill.—Petition from Leamington, against; to lie upon the Table 810

Transvaal (Chinese Labour Ordinance).—Petition from Bury, for withdrawal; to lie upon the Table 810

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

Medical Councils.—Accounts presented, for 1903, of the General Medical Council and Branch Councils, and of the Dental Registration Fund [by Act]; to lie upon the Table .. ..

Polling Districts (West Riding of the County of York).—Copy presented, of Order made by the County Council of the West Riding of the County of York altering certain Polling Districts in the Osgoldcross, Skipton, and Barnsley Parliamentary Divisions [by Act]; to lie upon the Table .. 811

Penal Servitude Acts Conditional Licence.—Copy presented, of Licences granted to Emma Mary Agnes West, a convict under detention in Aylesbury Prison, permitting her to be at large on condition that she enter the East End Refuge, Finchley [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 811

Board of Guardians (Persons in Receipt of Relief).—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 1st July, 1903; *Mr. Burt*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 113.] 811

Councils of Boroughs in England and Wales (Indebtedness).—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 24th June, 1903; *Mr. John Ellis*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 114.] 811

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Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896, and Motor Car Act, 1903.—Copy presented, of Regulations of the Local Government Board as to Registration and Licensing of Motor Cars under Section 6 of the Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896; and Section 7 of the Motor Car Act, 1903 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 811

Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896, and Motor Car Act, 1903.—Copy presented, of Regulations as to Use and Construction of Motor Cars made by the Local Government Board under Section 6 of The Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 811

Wines Imported.—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 29th February; *Sir Thomas Dewar*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 115.] .. 811

Army (Ordnance Factories).—Annual Account presented, for the year 1902–3, with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 116.] 811

Superannuation Act, 1887.—Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 24th March, 1904, granting to Mr. Thomas G. Stuart-French, Upper Division Clerk, Secretary's Office, Post Office, a retiring allowance under the Act [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 812

Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.—Copy presented, of Annual Report of Proceedings under the Tithe Acts, Copyhold Act, 1894, Inclosure Acts, and other Acts for the year 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 812

Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.—Copy presented, of Annual Reports of Proceedings under the Diseases of Animals Acts, the Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Acts, etc., for the year 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 812

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 3131 and 3132 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 812

Paper Laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House.—Inquiry into Charities (County of Wilts). Further Return relative thereto [ordered 9th August, 1901; *Mr. Griffith-Boscawen*]; to be printed. [No. 117.] 812

Fleets (Great Britain and Foreign Countries).—Return ordered, "showing the fleets of Great Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Italy, United States of America, and Japan, distinguishing: battleships, built and building; cruisers, built and building; coast defence vessels, built and building; torpedo vessels, torpedo boat destroyers, and torpedo boats, built and building."

"Return to show date of launch, displacement, and armaments, reduced to one common scale (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 165, of Session 1903)."—(*Sir Charles Dilke.*) 812

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Government Departments Securities.—Return ordered, "of the amounts of British Government Securities held by the several Government Departments and other Public Offices on the 31st day of March 1904, specifying whether held in England or Ireland (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 160, of Session 1903) :— 81

£2½ per Cent Consols.	£2¾ per Cents. (1905).	£2½ per Cents.	Local Loans £3 per Cent. Stock.	£2¾ per Cent. Guaranteed Land Stock.	£2¾ per Cent. War Loan.	Other Securities.		
						Annuities for terms of years.	Exchequer Bonds and Treasury Bills.	Local Loans Bonds.

—(*Mr. Victor Cavendish.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Land Transfer Rules.—Question, Sir Henry Fowler (Wolverhampton, E.); Answer, Sir Robert Finlay 813

Post Office Savings Bank.—Question, Dr. Macnamara; Answer, Lord Stanley 814

Promotion of Civil Service Writers to Abstractor Class in the War Office.—Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde (Wexford, N.); Answer, Mr. Victor Cavendish 815

Printed Answers—Saving under New Arrangement.—Question, Mr. Channing (Northamptonshire, E.); Answer, Mr. Victor Cavendish 815

Income Tax Collection in England and Scotland.—Question, Sir J. Stirling Maxwell (Glasgow College); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 815

Sea Police Duties of His Majesty's Ships "Seamew," "Speedwell," and "Cockchafer.—Question, Mr. Weir (Ross and Cromarty); Answer, Mr. A. Graham Murray 816

Tenders for Supplies at Haulbowline.—Question, Captain Donelan (Cork Co., E.); Answer, Mr. Pretyman 816

Grocery and Drapery Contracts for the Navy at Cork Harbour.—Question, Captain Donelan; Answer, Mr. Pretyman 817

Navy—Pensions and Promotions of Engineer Officers.—Question, Mr. Kearley (Devonport); Answer, Mr. Pretyman 817

Horse Breeding—King's Premiums.—Question, Mr. Lloyd Morgan (Carmarthen, W.); Answer, Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes 818

Opening of Portions of Kew Gardens to the Public.—Question, Mr. Joseph Howard (Middlesex, Tottenham); Answer, Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes .. 818

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REGISTRATION OF DOGS—FREE COLLARS.—Question, Mr. Cathcart Wason (Orkney and Shetland); Answer, Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes 819

FARMERS' EXEMPTION FROM DOG TAX.—Question, Mr. Cathcart Wason; Answer, Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes 819

VACCINATION EXEMPTION CERTIFICATES.—Question, Mr. Corrie Grant (Warwickshire, Rugby); Answer, Mr. Walter Long 819

REGULATIONS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS.—Question, Colonel Bowles (Middlesex, Enfield); Answer, Sir William Anson 820

DISCARDED CONSTABULARY RIFLES FOR IRISH VOLUNTEERS.—Question, Mr. John O'Donnell (Mayo, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 821

SOUTH PIER, DONAGHADEE HARBOUR.—Question, Mr. Wood (Down, E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 821

SUPPLY OF DRINK TO INTOXICATED PERSONS—LIMAVADY CASE.—Question, Mr. Sloan (Belfast, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 821

BELFAST CONSTABULARY BARRACKS.—Question, Mr. Sloan; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 822

EDUCATION OF DEAF AND DUMB CHILDREN IN IRELAND.—Question, Mr. Clancy (Dublin County, N.); Mr. Wyndham 823

EXTRA POLICE IN ARMAGH AND SLIGO.—Question, Mr. Lonsdale (Armagh, Mid.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 823

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY.—Question, Mr. Swift MacNeill; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 823

DUBLIN METROPOLITAN POLICE.—Question, Mr. Swift MacNeill; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 824

ARMY CONTRACTS—DRAPERY AND GROCERY IN THE CORK DISTRICT.—Question, Captain Donelan; Answer, Mr. Bromley Davenport 824

PIECE WORK IN ROYAL SMALL ARMS FRCTORY, ENFIELD.—Question, Colonel Bowles; Answer, Mr. Bromley Davenport 825

SIZE AND COST OF EUROPEAN ARMIES.—Question, Mr. Lough (Islington, W.); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 825

MILITARY REGULATIONS AS TO WEARING OF HATS.—Question, Mr. Platt-Higgins (Salford, N.); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 826

BRITISH ARMY IN INDIA.—Question, Mr. Herbert Roberts, (Denbighshire, W.); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 827

CIVIL RIGHTS OF IMPORTED CHINESE LABOURERS ON THE RAND.—Question, Mr. Lough; Answer, Mr. Lyttelton 827

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RECEIPTS OF TRANSVAAL RAILWAYS.—Question, Mr. Whitley (Halifax); Answer, Mr. Lyttelton 828

TRANSVAAL TREASURY RECEIPTS.—Question, Mr. Whitley; Answer, Mr. Lyttelton 828

CHINESE LABOUR ORDINANCE.—Question, Mr. Swift MacNeill; Answer, Mr. Lyttelton 829

POWERS OF ASSENT TO ORDINANCES OF LORD HIGH COMMISSIONER OR GOVERNOR OF THE TRANSVAAL.—Question, Mr. Black (Banffshire); Answer, Mr. Lyttelton 829

CHINESE LABOUR FOR THE TRANSVAAL—COST OF TRANSPORT.—Question, Mr. Black; Answer, Mr. Lyttelton 830

CHINESE LABOUR FOR THE TRANSVAAL—LICENCES FOR RECRUITING.—Question, Mr. Black; Answer, Mr. Lyttelton 830

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BARRACK EXPENDITURE IN SOUTH AFRICA.—Questions, Mr. Ainsworth (Argyllshire), and Mr. Osmond Williams (Merionethshire); Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Arnold Forster, Belfast, W.) 831

SOUTH AFRICAN WAR HONOURS.—Question, Mr. Ainsworth; Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 832

WAR OFFICE RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE.—Question, Mr. Lambert (Devonshire, South Molton); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 832

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LORD NORTHCOTE AND PREFERENTIAL TARIFFS.—Question, Mr. Cathcart Wason (Orkney and Shetland); Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Lyttelton, Warwick and Leamington) 834

CHINESE LABOUR IN THE TRANSVAAL—RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES.–Questions, Mr. Swift MacNeill (Donegal, S.), and Mr. Eugene Wason (Clackmannan and Kinross); Answers, Mr. Lyttelton 834

POLITICAL MISSION TO TIBET.—Questions, Mr. Trevelyan (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland), Mr. Flynn (Cork County, N.), and Mr. Lough (Islington, W.); Answers, The Secretary of State for India (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford) 835

PAPERS ON TIBET.—Question, Mr. Trevelyan; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 836

STRENGTH AND COST OF THE MISSION TO TIBET.—Question, Mr. Weir (Ross and Cromarty); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 836

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TIBET MISSION—THE CHINESE AMBAN.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 837

ADVANCE OF EXPEDITION IN TIBET.—Question, Mr. Lough; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 837

TIBET MISSION—VIEWS OF CHINESE GOVERNMENT.—Question, Mr. Lough; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 838

BRITISH TRADE WITH MOROCCO.—Question, Mr. Seymour Ormsby-Gore (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough); Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Earl Percy, Kensington, S.) 838

SHANGHAI AND NANKING RAILWAY.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, Earl Percy 839

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ESTATE OF LATE THOMAS THYNNE.—Question, Mr. O'Dowd (Sligo, S.); Answer, Earl Percy 841

ADEN AND SOMALI COAST MAILS.—Question, Sir Mancherjee Bhownaggree (Bethnal Green, N.E.); Answer, The Postmaster General (Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton) 841

NATIONAL EXPENDITURE.—Question, Sir Edgar Vincent (Exeter); Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.) 842

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CABINET MEMORANDA.—Question, Mr. Black; Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour .. 861

LICENSING LAW IN SCOTLAND.—Question, Sir Wilfrid Lawson (Cornwall, Camborne; Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 861

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—Questions, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs), Mr. John Redmond, and Mr. Edmund Robertson (Dundee); Answers, Mr. A. J. Balfour 862

NEW BILLS.

False Characters Bill.—"For the better prevention of giving False Characters to servants, and of offences connected therewith," presented by Mr. Skewes-Cox; supported by Mr. Bousfield, Mr. Atherley-Jones, Mr. Kimber, and Mr. O'Malley; to be read a second time upon Monday, 18th April, and to be printed. [Bill 142.] 863

Market Gardeners' Compensation Bill.—"To remove certain doubts as to the meaning of the Market Gardeners' Compensation Act, 1895," presented by Colonel Long; supported by Mr. Raymond Greene, Sir Thomas Esmonde, and Mr. Channing; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 14th April, and to be printed. [Bill 143.] 863

Education Scotland Bill.—

The Secretary for Scotland (*Mr. A. Graham Murray, Buteshire*) 864
Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (*Stirling Burghs*) 882
Mr. Weir (*Ross and Cromarty*) 884
Mr. Bryce (*Aberdeen, S.*) 884
Mr. Maconochie (*Aberdeenshire, E.*) 885

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Mr. Lloyd-George (Carnarvon Boroughs) 885
Mr. Haldane (Haddingtonshire) 886
Mr. Thomas Shaw (Hawick Burghs) 887
Sir Francis Powell (Wigan) 890
Mr. J. A. Campbell (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) 891
Mr. Cathcart Wason (Orkney and Shetland) 892
Dr. Macnamara (Camberwell, N.) 893
Mr. Maxwell (Dumfriesshire) 895
Captain Ellice (St. Andrews Burghs) 895
Mr Munro Ferguson (Leith Burghs) 895
Mr. John Dewar 897
Dr. Farquharson (Aberdeenshire, W.) 899
Mr. Black (Banffshire) 900
Mr. John Wilson (Glasgow, St. Rollox) 901
Mr. Ainsworth (Argyllshire) 901
The Master of Elibank (Edinburgh, Midlothian) 901
Mr. A. Graham Murray 901
Mr. Caldwell (Lanarkshire, Mid) 904

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).—Bill to amend the Laws relating to Education in Scotland, and for other purposes connected therewith, ordered to be brought in by Mr. A. Graham Murray and the Lord Advocate.

Education (Scotland) Bill.—" To amend the Laws relating to Education in Scotland, and for other purposes connected therewith," presented accordingly and read the first time ; to be read a second time upon Monday, 18th April, and to be printed. [Bill 144.]

Consolidation Fund (No. 1) Bill.—[THIRD READING].—Order for third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, " That the Bill be now read the third time."

Sir John Gorst (Cambridge University) 905
Mr. Crooks (Woolwich) 907
The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education (Sir William Anson, Oxford University) 910
Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.) 912
The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) 913
Mr. John Redmond (Waterford) 914
Mr. Flynn (Cork Co., N.) 915
Mr. Bryce (Aberdeen, S.) 915
Mr. Moon (St. Pancras, N.) 917
Mr. Charles Hobhouse (Bristol, E.) 918

And, it being half-past Seven of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned till this Evening's Sitting

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EVENING SITTING.

Consolidation Fund (No. 1) Bill.—Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [28th March], " That the Bill be now read the third time."

Question again proposed.

Mr. Charles Hobhouse 919
Mr. Charles Allen (Gloucestershire, Stroud) 920
Mr. Weir (Ross and Cromarty) 921
The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Earl Percy, Kensington, S.) 922
Mr. Trevelyan (Yorkshire, W. R., Elland) 929
Mr. Joseph Devlin (Kilkenny, N.) 931
Mr. Austin Taylor (Liverpool, East Toxteth) 933
Mr. Harris (Tynemouth) 937
Mr. Sydney Buxton (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) 939
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Lyttelton, Warwick and Leamington) 940
Mr. Swift MacNeill (Donegal, S.) 942
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 946

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

Telegraph (Money) Bill.—Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time to-morrow 952

Adjourned at ten minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: TUESDAY, 29th March, 1904.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Stading Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—Gomersal Gas; Bexhill Water and Gas; Torquay Tramways; Great Eastern Railway.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 953

Littlestone-on-Sea and District Water Bill.—Read 2ª, and committed .. 953

Elysée Palace Hotel Company Bill [H.L.]; Milwr and District Mines Drainage Bill [H.L.]. Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons 953

Bridlington Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Bristol Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Ebbw Vale Urban District Water Bill [H.L.]; Harrogate Waterworks Tramroads Bill [H.L.]; Leeds Corporation (Waterworks) Railway Bill [H.L.]; Llanelly Harbour Bill [H.L.]; Belfast Corporation (Tramways) Bill [H.L.]; Holywood Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Metropolitan District Railway Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Marquess of Bath be proposed to the House as a Member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Earl of Craven; read, and agreed to 953

Telegraph (Money) Bill.—Brought from the Commons 953

Bishop's Stortford and District Gas Bill; Great Central and Midland Joint Railways Bill. Brought from the Commons; read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners 953

Sutton Gas Bill; Croydon Gas Bill; Great Northern Railway Bill; London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway Bill; Ryde Gas Bill. Brought from the Commons; read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners 953

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PETITION.

Weights and Measures (Metric System) Bill [h.l.].—Petition in favour of; of Hammersmith Corporation; read, and ordered to lie on the Table .. 954

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

Trade Reports: Annual Series.—No. 3133. United States (Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky). No. 3134. Peru (Iquitos). 954

National Gallery, etc. (Scotland).—Tenth Annual Report to the Secretary for Scotland by the Commissioners and Trustees of the Board of Manufactures in Scotland, for the year ended 30th September, 1903 954

Police (Scotland).—Forty-sixth Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland, for the year ended 31st December, 1903 .. 954

Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.—Annual report of proceedings under the Tithe Acts, 1836 to 1891, the Copyhold Act, 1894, the Inclosure Acts, 1845 to 1899, the Agricultural Holdings Acts, 1883 to 1900, the Drainage and Improvement of Lands Act, the Universities and College Estates Acts, 1858 to 1898, the Glebe Land Acts, 1888, etc., etc., for the year 1903. Annual reports of proceedings under the Diseases of Animals Acts, the Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Acts, etc., etc., for the year 1903.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 954

Polling Districts (County of York, West Riding).—Order made by the County Council of the West Riding of the county of York altering certain polling districts in the Osgoldcross, Skipton, and Barnsley Parliamentary divisions. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 954

Business of the House.—Standing Order No. XXXIX. considered (according to order), and suspended for this day's sitting 955

Telegraph (Money) Bill.—Read 1^a; Then (Standing Order No. XXXIX. having been suspended) Bill read 2^a (The Earl Waldegrave); Committee negatived; Bill read 3^a; and passed 955

Commission.—The following Bills received the Royal Assent:—

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 1).
2. Telegraph (Money).
3. Metropolitan Improvements (Funds).
4. Dumbarton Tramways Order Confirmation.
5. Kilmarnock Corporation Order Confirmation 955

House adjourned at a quarter past Four o'clock, to Tuesday the 19th of April next, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: TUESDAY, 29TH MARCH, 1904.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills. That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz. :—Harlow and Sawbridgeworth Gas Bill [Lords]. Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time 955

Croydon Gas Bill; Great Northern Railway Bill; London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway Bill; Ryde Gas Bill. Read the third time, and passed 955

St. Marylebone Electric Lighting Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time 956

Weston-super-Mare Grand Pier Bill [Lords]. Read a second time, and committed 956

PRIVATE BILL, ETC.—Ordered, That Standing Orders 39, 128, and 230 be suspended, and that the time for depositing Petitions and Memorials against Private Bills or against any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate, and for depositing duplicates of any Documents relating to any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate, also for depositing at the Private Bill Office all Documents relating to any Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the Recess.—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means.*) 956

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to enable the Elysée Palace Hotel Company, Limited, to issue paid up ordinary shares in satisfaction of the deferred shares; to provide for the extinction of such deferred shares; and for other purposes." [Elysée Palace Hotel Company Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to effect the drainage of certain mines and mineral lands in the county of Flint; and for other purposes." [Milwr and District Mines Drainage Bill [Lords.] 956

Elysée Palace Hotel Company Bill [Lords]; Milwr and District Mines Drainage Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 956

PETITIONS.

BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTIONS (HOURS OF POLLING).—Petitions for legislation: from Bermondsey; and St. Pancras; to lie upon the Table 956

LICENSED PREMISES (HOURS OF CLOSING).—Petition from St. Pancras, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table 957

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LICENCES (RENEWAL).—Petitions against alteration of Law: from Bristol; Ponders End; Staines; Heaton; Armley (two); Mirfield; Morriston; Loddiswell; Thorpe Hesley; Chichester; Oakenholt; Mold; Dyserth; Bagillt; Rhosesmor; Greenfield; Pentre Halkin; Rishton; Hull; Cheltenham; Sheffield; and Thorganby and West Collingwith; to lie upon the Table .. 957

PUBLIC LIBRARIES BILL.—Petition from Aberdeen, in favour; to lie upon the Table 957

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.—Petitions in favour: from Horncastle; and Colchester; to lie upon the Table 957

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

POLICE (SCOTLAND).—Copy presented, of Forty-sixth Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland for the year ended 31st December, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 957

NATIONAL GALLERY, ETC. (SCOTLAND).—Copy presented, of Tenth Annual Report to the Secretary for Scotland by the Commissioners and Trustees of the Board of Manufactures in Scotland, being for the year ending 30th September, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 957

POOR LAW MEDICAL RELIEF (SCOTLAND).—Copy presented, of Report of a Departmental Committee appointed by the Local Government Board for Scotland to inquire into the system of Poor Law Medical Relief, and into the Rules and Regulations for the Management of Poorhouses, with Supplement [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 957

AGRICULTURE AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION (IRELAND) ACT, 1899—Copy presented, of Order transferring to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, the powers and duties of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland in respect of the portion of the Sea and Coast Fisheries Fund placed at the disposal of the Department by the Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act, 1899 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 957

AGRICULTURE AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION (IRELAND) ACT, 1899.—Copy presented, of Amended Regulations made by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland as to the taking of samples under the Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act, 1893 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table .. 958

LOCAL BANKRUPTCY (IRELAND) ACT, 1888.—Copy presented, of Order in Council, dated 24th March, 1904, adding the county of Armagh to the district assigned to the Belfast Local Bankruptcy Court [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 958

COOLIE IMMIGRATION.—Copy presented, of Immigration Ordinances of Trinidad and British Guiana [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 958

POOR RELIEF (ENGLAND AND WALES).—Copy ordered, "of Statement of the Amount expended by Boards of Guardians for In-maintenance and Out-door Relief in England and Wales during the half-year ended Lady Day, 1904."

"And similar statement for the half-year ending Michaelmas, 1904"—(*Mr. Grant Lawson.*) 958

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

GRIEVANCES OF POST OFFICE EMPLOYEES—REPORT OF COMMITTEE.—Question, Mr. Bond (Nottingham, E.); Answer, Lord Stanley 958

INSTRUCTION IN HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY IN HIGHLANDS.—Question, Mr. Weir (Ross and Cromarty); Answer, Mr. A. Graham Murray 959

FORTNIGHTLY PAYMENT OF WAGES ON THE CLYDE.—Question, Mr. Hunter Craig (Lanarkshire, Govan); Answer, Mr. A. Graham Murray 959

TENDERS FOR ADMIRALTY YACHT "ENCHANTRESS."—Question, Mr. Austin Taylor (Liverpool, East Toxteth); Answer, Mr. Pretyman 959

RE-ARMOURING OF SHIPS OF "ROYAL SOVEREIGN" CLASS.—Question, Mr. J. F. Hope (Sheffield, Brightside); Answer, Mr. Pretyman 960

GERMAN SHIPBUILDING PROGRAMME.—Question, Mr. Yerburgh (Chester); Answer, Mr. Pretyman 960

POST OFFICE AND NATIONAL TELEPHONE COMPANY.—Question, Sir F. Dixon-Hartland (Middlesex, Uxbridge); Answer, Lord Stanley 960

ALLEGED NEGLECT IN DUBLIN POST OFFICE.—Question, Mr. Patrick O'Brien (Kilkenny); Answer, Lord Stanley 961

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WORKING HOURS IN DUBLIN SORTING OFFICE.—Question, Mr. Nannetti (Dublin, College Green); Answer, Lord Stanley 962

DUTIES OF FEMALE TELEGRAPHISTS IN DUBLIN POST OFFICE.—Question, Mr. Nannetti; Answer, Lord Stanley 962

DISCHARGES FROM POST OFFICE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT.—Question, Captain Norton (Newington, W.); Answer, Lord Stanley 962

HOUSE OF COMMONS POST OFFICE—SECRECY OF TELEGRAMS.—Question, Mr. Patrick O'Brien; Answer, Lord Stanley 963

PASSIVE RESISTERS IN PRISONERS' DOCK.—Question, Mr. Channing (Northamptonshire, E.); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 963

GOVERNMENT TESTING OF LEADLESS GLAZE.—Question, Sir Charles Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 964

MR. HOOLEY—SUGGESTED PUBLIC PROSECUTION.—Question, Sir Albert Rollit (Islington, S.); Answer, Sir Robert Finlay 965

VALUATION BILL—DATE OF INTRODUCTION.—Question, Sir Albert Rollit; Answer, Mr. Walter Long 965

PORT OF LONDON BILL.—Question, Sir Albert Rollit; Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 965

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LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN THE CASTLEBAR UNION; Question, Dr. Ambrose (Mayo, W.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 967

TEACHING OF BLIND AND EPILEPTIC CHILDREN IN IRELAND.—Question, Mr. Clancy (Dublin Co., N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 968

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PHYSICAL TESTS FOR VOLUNTEERS.—Question, Mr. Yerburgh; Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 969

ARMY—AGES OF RECRUITS—COST OF TRAINING.—Question, Mr. Yerburgh; Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 969

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COMPULSORY RETIREMENT OF MAJOR-GENERALS GATACRE, THYNNE AND TROTTER.—Question, Mr. Scott-Montagu (Hampshire, New Forest); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 970

EXPLOSION OF SHELL AT RATHCOURSEY—GOVERNMENT COMPENSATION.—Question, Captain Donelan (Cork, E.); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster .. 971

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RECRUITING OF LABOUR IN CHINA FOR THE TRANSVAAL.—Question, Mr. Herbert Samuel; Answer, Mr. Lyttelton 975

TERMS OF CHINESE LABOURERS' CONTRACTS.—Questions, Mr. Sydney Buxton (Tower Hamlets, Poplar); and Mr. Crooks (Woolwich); Answers, Mr. Lyttelton 975

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MALTA.—Question, Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.); Answer, Mr. Lyttelton 977

CAPE INSCRIBED STOCK INCOME TAX DEDUCTIONS.—Questions, Mr. Weir (Ross and Cromarty); Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.) 977

UNIFORM RAILWAY BY-LAWS.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 978

DAIRY INSPECTION.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, The Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Grant Lawson, Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) 979

HIGH COURTS OF JUSTICE—ARREARS OF BUSINESS.—Question, Mr. Osmond Williams (Merionethshire); Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Robert Finlay, Inverness Burghs) 979

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COOKERY INSTRUCTION IN HIGHLAND CROFTING COUNTIES.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. Scott Dickson, Glasgow, Bridgton) 980

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OWENMORE RIVER.—Question, Mr. O'Dowd (Sligo, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 984

TIPPERARY URBAN COUNCIL SURCHARGES.—Questions, Mr. Cullinan (Tipperary, S.), and Mr. T. W. Russell (Tyrone, S.); Answers, Mr. Wyndham 985

CARE OF FEEBLE-MINDED PERSONS.—Question, Mr. Charles Hobhouse (Bristol, E.); Answer, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 986

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—Questions, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs) and Mr. Lough (Islington, W.); Answers, Mr. A. J. Balfour .. 986

CUNARD AGREEMENT [MONEY].—Committee to consider of authorising the issue out of the Consolidated Fund of such sums as are required for making advances to the Cunard Steamship Company under an agreement made with that Company (King's Recommendation signified), upon Tuesday, 12th April.—(*Mr. Victor Cavendish.*)

Site for Duke of York's School Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 14th April, and to be printed. [Bill 145.]

Site for Duke of York's School Bill [LORDS].—Ordered, That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Site for Duke of York's School Bill [Lords], with respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bills.

Naval Prize Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 12th April, and to be printed. [Bill 146.]

Aliens Bill.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (*Mr. Akers Douglas, Kent, St. Augustine's*) 987

Motion made and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make provision with respect to the Immigration of Aliens and other matters incidental thereto."—(*Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas.*)

Sir Charles Dilke (*Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean*) 991

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas, Mr. Secretary Lyttelton, Mr. Long, Mr. Attorney-General, and Mr. Cochrane.

Aliens Bill.—To make provision with respect to the Immigration of Aliens and other matters incidental thereto," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 12th April, and to be printed. [Bill 147.]

Telegraph (Money) Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have agreed to—Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill, Telegraph (Money) Bill, without Amendment.

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ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE (EASTER.)—Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House, at the rising of the House this Evening, do adjourn until Tuesday, 12th April, and that, at the conclusion of the proceedings on Notices of Motion at this Evening's Sitting, Mr. Speaker do adjourn the House without Question put."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (*Stirling Burghs*) 996
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (*Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.*) 1003

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners.

The House went; and, being returned,

Mr. SPEAKER reported the Royal Assent to—

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Act, 1904.
2. Telegraph (Money) Act, 1904.
3. Metropolitan Improvements (Funds) Act, 1904.
4. Dumbarton Tramways Order Confirmation Act, 1904.
5. Kilmarnock Corporation Order Confirmation Act, 1904.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE (EASTER.)—Question again proposed, "That this House, at the rising of the House this Evening, do adjourn until Tuesday, 12th April, and that at the conclusion of the proceedings on Notices of Motion at this Evening's Sitting, Mr. SPEAKER do adjourn the House without Question put."

Mr. A. J. Balfour 1010
Mr. Lloyd-George (*Carnarvon Boroughs*) 1017
Mr. Winston Churchill (*Oldham*) 1022
Mr. Robson (*South Shields*) 1025
Sir John Gorst (*Cambridge University*) 1028
Mr. Boland (*Kerry, S.*) 1029
Mr. Cullinan (*Tipperary, S.*) 1031
Mr. T. W. Russell (*Tyrone, S.*) 1032
Mr. William Redmond (*Clare, E.*) 1033
The Chief Secretary for Ireland (*Mr. Wyndham, Dover*) 1035
Sir Walter Foster (*Derbyshire, Ilkeston*) 1039
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (*Mr. Lyttelton, Warwick and Leamington*) 1040
Mr. Trevelyan (*Yorkshire, W.R., Elland*) 1041
The Secretary of State for India (*Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford*) 1041
Sir Robert Reid (*Dumfries Burghs*) 1042
Mr. Power (*Waterford, E.*) 1043

Question put, and agreed to.

And, there being no further Business set down for this Afternoon's Sitting, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair till this Evening's Sitting.

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EVENING SITTING.

POLICE (IRELAND).

Mr. Swift MacNeill (Donegal, S.) 1044
Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.) 1046

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House strongly condemns the attitude of the Government in neglecting the introduction of legislation for the purpose of bringing under the control of popularly elected bodies, as in the cases of the police force in Great Britain, the Royal Irish Constabulary, and the Dublin Metropolitan Police, and declares that the exemption of these overmanned and armed forces from such control and the vesting of all control over them in the Executive Government is a standing menace to the liberty of the subject, a cause of enhanced and unnecessary public expenditure, and attended with frequent infraction of Common Law rights and grave scandals in the administration of the Criminal Law in Ireland."—(*Mr. Swift MacNeill.*)

Colonel Saunderson (Armagh, N.) 1051
Mr. Mooney (Dublin County, N.) 1055
The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.) .. 1056
Mr. Wolff (Belfast, E.) 1059
Mr. Coghill (Stoke-upon-Trent) 1061

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 65 ; Noes, 157. (Division List No. 73.)

Notice taken that forty Members were not present ; House counted, and forty Members not being present,

The House was adjourned.

Adjourned at twenty minutes after Eleven o'clock till Tuesday, 12th April.

END OF TABLE OF CONTENTS TO VOL. CXXXII.

THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(*AUTHORISED EDITION*)

IN THE

FIFTH SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*, IN THE
FOURTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF

HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII.

FOURTH VOLUME OF SESSION.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 18*th March*, 1904.

MARQUESS OF SLIGO.

Report made from the Lord Chancellor that the right of Henry Ulick Marquess of Sligo, in the Peerage of Ireland, to vote at the election of Representative Peers for Ireland has been established to the satisfaction of the Lord Chancellor; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

SAT FIRST.

The Lord Monteagle (*M. Sligo*) sat first in Parliament after the death of his brother.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—Whitby Gas; Hampton-in-Arden Gas. The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

St. Marylebone Chapels (St. James', Westmoreland Street) Bill [H.L.]. Report from His Majesty's Attorney-General received, and ordered to lie on the Table.

Nuneaton and Chilvers Coton Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]; Victoria University of Yorkshire Bill [H.L.]. Committee to meet on Tuesday next.

Metropolitan Railway Bill [H.L.]. Reported, with amendments.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne Corporation Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Lord Fermanagh (*E. Erne*) be proposed to the House as a member of the Select Committee on the said Bill in the place of the Lord Barnard, and that the Lord Fermanagh (*E. Erne*) be Chairman of the said Committee; read, and agreed to.

Blyth and Cowpen Gas Bill. Read 2^a, and committed.

New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company Bill [H.L.]. Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Corbridge Gas Bill; Great Eastern Railway (Steamboats) Bill; South-Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway (Extension of Time) Bill. Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; and referred to the Examiners.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

VENEZUELA, No 1 (1904).

Award of the Tribunal of Arbitration constituted in virtue of the Protocols signed at Washington, 7th May, 1903, between Germany, Great Britain, and Italy on the one hand, and Venezuela on the other hand.

TRANSVAAL.

Further correspondence relating to the Transvaal Labour Question (in continuation of [Cd. 1941], March, 1904).

MARRIAGES, BIRTHS, AND DEATHS (ENGLAND AND WALES).

General abstract of marriages, births, and deaths registered in England and Wales in the year 1903.

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.

Returns of accidents and casualties, as reported to the Board of Trade by the several railway companies in the United Kingdom during the year ended 31st December, 1903, in pursuance of the Regulation of Railways Act (1871), 34 and 35 Vict., cap. 78, together with Reports of the inspecting officers, assistant, inspecting officers, and sub-inspectors of the Railway Department to the Board of Trade, upon certain accidents which were inquired into; Part I. Accident Returns. Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX).

Order made by the County Council of the county of Middlesex, altering certain polling districts in the Harrow Parliamentary division.

METROPOLITAN CATTLE MARKET.

Account of moneys received and paid by the Chamberlain of the city of London for the year 1903, also account of extraordinary works executed, other than general repairs, for the same period. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, BEDFORD.

Petition for redress of grievances; of inhabitants of Bedford; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

CHINESE LABOUR FOR THE TRANSVAAL.

*LORD COLERIDGE rose to move to resolve, "That this House disapproves of the importation of Chinese labourers into the Transvaal under the recent Ordinance until the grant to that country of full representative government." He said: My Lords, I do not apologise to the House for bringing on this question, although it has been alluded to and debated, in some measure, already twice this session. On the first occasion on which the matter was mentioned the discussion was limited in its scope, and although the Report of the Transvaal Labour Commission was then in the hands of your Lordships the evidence upon which that Report was founded was not; and on the second occasion on which the matter was raised, the discussion ranged over a still more limited area, and was wholly confined to the questions of the legality or the advisability of the regulations under the Ordinance. As the question of the importation of Chinese into the Transvaal is of so great importance, I do not apologise for introducing the matter again. Of great importance it is, because many people believe—I myself among the number—that upon the decision of this question hangs the ultimate fate of the Transvaal, and not only the Transvaal, but of all the non-self-governing African Colonies—whether or not they will be populated in the future by the white man, by British settlers, or whether they will be the home—the temporary home—of a few people deriving vast revenues from a horde of servile labour.

If the latter is a true picture of the future of South Africa it certainly is in violent contrast to the objects for which we asserted we were fighting in that country. We certainly did not for that object expend the millions that we spent or sacrifice the lives that were lost; and certainly it was not for that object, not with the notion that that would be the result, that the working men of this country on the whole approved of, and voted for, the continuation of the war. Nor, my Lords, was it so very long ago our mode of dealing with the Boers in the Transvaal Republic. We had strong views about slavery, and at the time of the Sand River Convention in 1852, which was the beginning of the independence, or semi-independence, of the Transvaal, we made this stipulation between ourselves and the Boers—

> "It is agreed that no slavery is, or shall be, permitted or practised in the country to the north of the Vaal River by the emigrant farmers."

Then came the Pretoria Convention and the London Convention, and in those two Conventions that stipulation was widened. In the London Convention of 1884 we placed this clause—

> "The South African Republic renews the declaration made in the Sand River Convention and in the Convention of Pretoria that no slavery, or apprenticeship partaking of slavery, will be tolerated by the Government of the said Republic."

We were told that the outcome of the war would be—and we hoped it would be—to throw open the Transvaal to British settlers, to British industry, to the British race. I think it was in the middle of the last election, or just at the close of that election, that the late Colonial Secretary made an important speech at Lichfield. It was on 8th October, 1900, and in the course of that speech Mr. Chamberlain said—

> "A second reason which, I think, has affected the Vote of the miners in the North is that this war is, in a certain sense, a miners' war; that is to say, it has been undertaken in order that justice may be done to the miners in the Transvaal."

and on 29th January, 1902, the noble and learned Earl on the Woolsack, in language that I cannot hope to rival, said—

> "What magic charm was it that surrounded the British Islands that from all parts of our dominions men were willing to help us? The fact was realised that where the British flag flies there shall be liberty."

Mr. Balfour, at the Guildhall on 13th February, 1902, said—

> "All alike are enamoured of freedom, all alike are pledged to those institutions which have their origin in English freedom."

That language would sound strange if repeated in the middle of a Chinese compound. At Johannesburg on 8th January, 1902, Lord Milner used these memorable words—

> "A great Johannesburg—great not only in numbers but in the character of its inhabitants, in intelligence, cultivation, and public spirit—means a British Transvaal. A British Transvaal turns the scale in favour of a British South Africa, and a British South Africa will go a long way to consolidate the British Empire."

These were brave words, and I could wish that they were repeated now. I have tried to find out to whose mind it first occurred to introduce Chinese into South Africa. The idea of importing Chinese, under conditions of servitude, seems first to have occurred to the mind of Mr. Rhodes, who desired to introduce them into Rhodesia; but that desire was, happily, at once objected to and frustrated by Mr. Chamberlain, who, in a letter to *The Times* on 1st October, 1900, wrote these words—

> "Before assenting the Government would have to consider the general welfare of the South African population, both black and white, and the general public opinion in the South African Colonies."

Until the holding of the Bloemfontein conference in the month of March, 1903, the matter seems to have been closed by those words, and not to have attracted any public attention. But in that month there was a conference of the official representatives of the various South African Colonies at Bloemfontein, and there a hypothetical resolution was passed that, in the event of its being proved that there was not sufficient black labour forthcoming in South Africa, measures should be taken to obtain some labour—it was not stipulated what—from outside. But at that time the theme of, or the thread which ran through, all the speeches made by the great financiers of the Rand was that they did not want British labour.

I would point out to the House this important fact, that at that time the objection to white labour was not founded on the score of expense. It had not then apparently occurred to the great financiers of the Rand that there was any financial difficulty in employing a great many more white people than had been hitherto employed upon the Rand. The objection to white labour was not on the score of expense, but on political grounds. A memorandum was presented to Mr. Chamberlain at Johannesburg in 1902, which has often been referred to in these discussions, which spoke of—

> "The trail of the serpent, the formation of labour unions."

Mr. Percy Tarbutt, a director, I believe, of the Consolidated Goldfields Company and chairman of the Village Main Reef, writing to his manager in July, 1902—his manager was then about to undertake, or was undertaking, the experiment of employing a greater number of white men—said this—

> "I have consulted the Consolidated Goldfields people, and one of the members of the Board of the Village Main Reef has consulted Wernher, Beit, and Co., and the feeling seems to be one of fear that, if a large number of white men are employed on the Rand in the position of labourers, the same troubles will arise as are now prevalent in the Australian Colonies, *i.e.*, that the combination of the labouring classes will become so strong as to be able to more or less dictate, not only on questions of wages, but also on political questions by the power of votes when a representative Government is established.

Mr. Rudd, another magnate, writing to *The Times* on 10th February, 1903, said—

> "They would simply hold the Government of the country in the hollow of their hand, and, without any disparagement to the British labourer, I prefer to see the more intellectual section of the community at the helm."

Therefore, up to that date it had not apparently occurred to any of these great magnates that it was impossible, on the score of expense, to supplement any dearth of black labour by the larger employment of white labour. Then came the conference at Bloemfontein, which took no evidence, and whose report was a mere expression of opinion of the official representatives of the colonies there assembled. I do not desire in any way to detract from its weight on that account. That it did not accurately represent public opinion is shown conclusively by the fact that Sir Gordon Sprigg, who took part in that conference and voted for that Resolution, shortly afterwards—in July—was forwarding to the High Commissioner a Resolution passed unanimously by both Houses of the Legislature at the Cape recording their strong opposition to any importation of Chinese labour as prejudicial to the interests of all classes of people in South Africa. Meanwhile, it appears that Lord Milner, who up to a certain time seemed to have had an equally strong desire to resist any importation of the character described, had become a strong advocate for the importation of Chinese labourers. He followed most accurately the financiers of the Rand, and supported Chinese labour on the same grounds. He did not object to the accession of white labour on the ground of expense, for in a speech made to an organisation called the White League, formed for the encouragement of the importation of white labour, he said—

> "We do not want a white proletariat."

Therefore, my Lords, up to this time, scarcity or no scarcity, the feeling of the financiers and of Lord Milner was that there was no objection on the score of expense to making good any scarcity by the importation of white labour, but that the political danger from such importation was overwhelming.

By this time men's minds had turned to the solving of the question by the importation of indentured Chinese. A Commission was appointed to inquire into the scarcity of labour in South Africa. I do not quarrel—it would be foolish and unreasonable to do so—with the composition of that Commission. This was a burning question, and if you were to appoint persons out there of commanding importance, of commanding position, it was inevitable that you must appoint persons of strong preconceived ideas. Unless you imported the members from abroad, you could not get a tribunal to consider this question which was free from bias or free from preconceived ideas. The Commission was composed of twelve men. There was a Majority Report signed by ten and a Minority Report signed by two. Of the ten who signed the former Report eight had expressed the very strongest views in favour of the importation of Chinese labour, and I have no doubt that the other two had similarly expressed themselves, but I have been unable to put my hand on the passages. One would have thought that a Commission formed to discuss this question would have been empowered to inquire into the advisability, or otherwise, of importing Chinese. That was the subject uppermost in everybody's mind; yet it was the one subject eliminated from the purview of the discussion. It was like King Charles' head—it was continually coming up; but they steered round and round it, and whenever the word Chinese was mentioned the chairman ruled it out of order. The evidence which was presented to that Commission was selected and arranged by a preliminary commission of the Chamber of Mines. Five of the members of the Commission were members of the Chamber of Mines, or of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, which the evidence shows is the same thing under another name. Twenty out of twenty-three witnesses representing the mining industry were specially deputed by the Chamber of Mines to appear. We might have had very valuable evidence, if the Commission had been empowered to examine into it, of the effect of the importation of Chinese labour on the farmers, the Kaffirs, and the British. But the House is left in total ignorance with regard to that. They were restricted to examine into the quantity and supply of black labour. In substance the Majority Report was to the effect that there was a shortage of labour, and that the deficiency could not be supplied from South Africa.

Now, my Lords, I think there is very grave reason to question the soundness of those conclusions. I do not dispute for a moment that there was a shortage of labour. But why? I submit that the evidence is very strong to show that it was partly because of the conditions imposed, and largely on account of the awful mortality in the compounds, and the treatment which the natives received there, and there is evidence to show that it was also largely to be accounted for by the absence of activity in recruiting. There was not always a shortage of Kaffir labour in the mines. In 1895 and 1897 there was a surplus supply over the demand, and in 1892 and 1897 so strong was the position of the mine-owners in respect to labour that wages were reduced. The Commission opened with some very significant evidence. Several missionaries were called, and they stated that the confidence of the Kaffir had been largely shaken by the reduction of wages, which is now lamented by the mine-owners as well as by everyone else—the reduction which took place immediately after the war, when there was a scarcity rather than an abundance of labour. It also appeared from the evidence of these missionaries that the labourers are kicked about, and are compelled to go to mines not chosen by them, but by their employers, and mines against which they are prejudiced. The Rev. R. H. Dyke says—

> "A man comes up and loses a limb, and goes away maimed for life, and no compensation is given him."

He describes the great difference between the treatment of the Kaffirs on the Rand and their treatment in the Kimberley compounds, and shows that there has never been a scarcity of black labour at Kimberley, owing, as he describes, to the very different treatment which the blacks receive in the Kimberley mines. The Rev, E. Creux, another missionary, spoke of the fearful corruption and contamination in the compounds, and said that:

> "If the general conditions were improved you could get a largely increased supply. The best touts and the best labour commissioners are the natives themselves."

And I should think that was common sense. The Rev. F. Suter, who came from Zululand, stated that he had seen them sick and neglected; and right rev. Prelates will be interested to hear that when he was asked why he had not complained he said he feared that if he complained he would be prevented from going into the compounds, and that great difficulties were placed in the way of missionaries going into the compounds.

Sir Godfrey Lagden, whose evidence was largely relied upon by the Majority Report, spoke of the conditions in the compounds as being very bad. He said that it was necessary that there should be better food, and that one doctor paying an occasional visit to each mine—one visit a day—was wholly insufficient. And then he gave a most remarkable piece of evidence, which is quite enough to account for any shortage of labour. He stated that there is a mortality in the mines of seventy per thousand, and it is also quite clear that some mines are better looked after than others, and that in a great many of them the mortality is not so large. But if it is less than seventy per thousand in some mines, and the average is seventy in all, what a picture is presented of the state of things in those compounds where the average rate of mortality is largely exceeded! Under the process of recruiting instituted by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, the native is unable to choose which mine he goes to, and he knows that he has the chance of being drafted off against his will to a compound where the mortality may largely exceed seventy per thousand. It is said that the Kaffir in South Africa is idle and indolent, and disinclined for work. In the face of that mortality it seems to me that the eagerness of the Kaffir to work, considering the numbers that come, is beyond all praise. I should like to know how many British workmen would go into a compound or into any mine where the mortality approached anything like the figure which obtains in the mines of the Transvaal. Therefore I say, from pure humanitarian reasons as well as from sound common sense, the mine-owners have no right to ask this House or the country to give them greater facilities for the introduction of labour until they have remedied this awful mortality, which must minimise the attraction of mines to the Kaffir in the Transvaal. Then there was evidence as to the meal supplied. Mr. Douglas H. Fraser described the meal as entirely unfit for food; and Mr. William Grant, Native Commissioner of Witwatersrand, spoke of the outcome to-day—that is, the scarcity to-day—as the result of ignorance or design; and he added—

> "I go as far as that."

That leads me to investigate, shortly, what reason there is to suppose that the shortage of labour is due to inactivity of recruiting. Before I pass to that I may state that on 22nd October, 1900, the whole system of recruiting was altered. As far as I can gather, up to that time there had been private recruiters who conveyed Kaffirs to the mines and got a commission on the numbers brought; but in the year 1900 the Chamber of Mines determined to have a monopoly of recruiting. They formed an association called the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, and said they would have no labourers except those recruited by their Association. The result was that they held in their hand the whole of the recruiting, and it depended upon their activity as to the number of labourers recruited. I desire, my Lords, to call your attention to the evidence of a witness named Cabral. He had been a private recruiter in Portuguese East Africa, the part of South Africa from which it is admitted that something like 80 per cent. of the labourers are recruited. He said—

Lord Coleridge.

> "When the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association began to recruit for themselves they sent down compound managers accompanied by natives."

Compound managers to hire the natives; and the natives, presumably, to show their gold and to tell their friends how advisable it was that they should go to the mines—

> "I received a circular asking me, encouraging me, to put all facilities in the way of the agents of the company; and, on the other hand, I also received a letter from the Association in which I was told to lay every obstacle in the way, and not to give them any facilities."

The letter which he produced was written from the agency of the Witwatersrand Labour Association at Lorenço Marques. It was signed by J. M. Murray, who is still the secretary of the company, and was written by the authority of a Mr. Pickard, who was the manager of the agency at Lorenço Marques. The letter ran as follows—

> "Dear Sir,—With reference to the compound managers who proceed to the country to-day, you will understand that it is important that these managers should get only those natives recruited by native collectors, and must not get natives recruited by your own runners. It is to your interest that I point this out, because if these men go back to Johannesburg with a large haul of natives, they will make the most of the fact and create an impression

that the recruiters have not done their best in the past, and that these compound managers make more successful recruiters than the present staff. These men have the idea that they have only to present themselves in the country when the natives will immediately flock round them, and so, I think, it rests with you to see that they leave your camp with a different opinion. I do not wish you to put obstacles in their way"

Of course not—

"But it is not to your interest to make them presents of natives recruited by yourself."

He was then asked whether the circular which he received was sent to the other men down there, and his anwer was—

"All over the country."

He said—

"I did not understand at first their instructions, one telling me to encourage the compound managers and the other to discourage them, so I asked them verbally and I received additional instructions -verbal instructions—to hinder them in every way I could."

He was then asked—

"You say that having got two sets of instructions, one to help and the other to hinder them, you did not know what to do, so you asked?"

His reply was in the affirmative. He was next asked—

"And then you were told to hinder them all all you could?"

And he replied—

"Yes."

He was asked—

"Did the compound managers return to Johannesburg with a good haul of boys?"

"No."

"So you did your work all right?"

"Yes, according to instructions."

If that is the way in which recruiting is carried on in that part of Africa, which it is admitted produced 80 per cent. of the labourers in the Rand, it is not very wonderful that there is a scarcity of labour. I do not at all wish to place the thing in a worse light than it appears. Mr. Perry, who was the manager in Johannesburg of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, was then called and asked to explain this letter. This is his explanation—

"It may be convenient if I explain what the position was with regard to the native collectors and compound managers. As regards this letter, I may say this first, that neither I, nor anyone connected with the Association here, saw it till to-day, and I may say at once that I do not approve of it. It is not that there is anything in the letter itself to object to, when the circumstances are understood, but I think that the tone of it is wrong."

That is Mr. Perry's explanation. Then Mr. Perry was asked whether Mr. Cabral had not been dismissed from the Association, and he said he had, and I have no doubt Mr. Cabral was prejudiced against the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association and was trying to do that Association all the harm he could. But there was the letter he produced and the explanation given by Mr. Perry.

Recalled, Mr. Cabral stated that he went to Coguno, on receipt of these double instructions, and received from the agent there, a man named Neerguard, instructions to make one of the compound managers miss his boat to Delagoa Bay. He was going to start on 20th April—

"Do your best," (Neerguard said) "to pursuade him to leave on 28th April, it will be one less."

On that day there was no boat. He complied with those instructions. He said—

"Well, on the 28th there was no steamer, and this the agent knew very well. What he wanted was to get rid of one of them. As he said, 'there will always be one less.' I complied with those instructions, and pursuaded Munyer to leave, and the result was that he came back to Imhabane in time to take the boat on the 28th which never existed in the Machiavellian plans of the agent."

He continued—

"You have already had the opportunity of seeing that the Association has, like certain merchants with invoices, two sorts of correspondents—the one 'private and confidential,' containing the instructions to its staff, and the other one to show in case of complications."

Mr. Cabral later on said—

"If you are willing to call the said manager, Mr. Pickard, now in Johannesburg, I have no doubt he will confirm what I declare."

I think the matter is left in a very unsatisfactory state, because Pickard, who, at the time the Commission sat, was in Johannesburg, and was challenged to be produced by Mr. Cabral, was not called. Moreover, Mr. Murray, the man who wrote that letter, is still secretary of the Association, and he, too, was not called. Neerguard, the man who gave the verbal instructions when Cabral went to him in his difficulty, was not called.

I make no accusation against the head people of the Witwatersrand Association. I daresay they were not cognisant of what was going on, but that something in the way of hindering recruiting was taking place is absolutely certain; and in the absence of those witnesses who were challenged to be produced, I do not think I am saying more than I am justified in saying when I state that the matter is left in an exceedingly unsatisfactory condition.

How did the Report of the majority deal with this matter? As showing the manner in which it struck their minds I will read what they say—

> "The inquiry into the administrative methods of, and results obtained by, the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association was of a more searching character, as accusations against the sincerity of its officers had been freely made. No evidence whatever was brought in support of these accusations."

This is an amazing statement, which seems to me to qualify a good deal the importance we attach to the conclusions of the Majority Report. Only one miner was called before that Commission, and he was summoned by the Chamber of Mines. He came up in such terror, apparently, that he desired his name might not be disclosed. Of course, that request was not granted. It was observed that he seemed very nervous. That was the attitude of the only miner called before this Commission. Two Kaffirs were called, and two only, and they, to use a vulgar phrase, entirely "gave the show away," because they said they received low wages and were kicked and bullied. They complained of their treatment, and one of them—Umhalla—said that since the war it was very bad, and much more so than when the Boers ruled. To show how deplorable an effect the lowering of wages had upon the recruiting power of the Association, I may mention that this Kaffir, Umhalla, was not aware that the wages had been raised, although they had been raised for some two years. That shows how patient we must be in the matter. We must not assume that everything we do immediately becomes known to the Kaffirs. There are 13,597,691 black people in South and Central Africa and Uganda, and it is obvious that there are plenty of people to come, if they can be got to come. The Report of the Majority says that they want to run 7,145 stamps, at twenty per stamp. That is the basis of their claim. Why their own witnesses admitted that they were running throughout at from ten to twelve per stamp, and that in the old days before the war they never ran at more than fifteen per stamp. But now they are claiming to want twenty per stamp. Therefore I say that 142,000, which they say they want, is a gross over-estimate.

Lord Coleridge.

I ask, why not employ white men more largely? There were two important witnesses, not called by the Chamber of Mines, who gave absolutely independent evidence before the Commission. One was a Mr. Creswell, who was manager of the Village Main Reef, and he said that from January, 1902, to March, 1903, he tried the experiment successfully, but was then stopped from further trying it. He said he was not ordered to desist until after he gave utterance to views to Mr. Chamberlain which were regarded by the managers as heretical. He said that if China and Asia had been sunk into the sea, the mines would be working very well to-day by white unskilled labour. The other witness was Mr. Wybergh, Commissioner of Mines, who stated that where there was a will there was a way. He gave reasons for the employment of white labour, and his views were also regarded as heretical. He was dismissed from the Consolidated Goldfields on political grounds, and he stated in evidence before the Commission that he had been personally subjected to political pressure. I think I have given reasons for showing that there is grave reason to doubt the soundness of the judgment displayed upon the facts by the majority of the Commission. I am making no attack upon them. I say that they are only acting as everybody would act in their place. The mineowners see before them the alluring prospect of cheap Chinese imported labour. They have the sole monopoly of recruiting black labour. If that recruiting were successful it would be the main thing to weaken the argument for the necessity of Chinese labour. In these circumstances I do not think it is unreasonable that their efforts at recruiting have not been crowned with conspicuous success. Mr. Chamberlain, when in South Africa, gave to the country what was tantamount to a pledge on the part of the Government, that Chinese labour would not be introduced without the assent of the Empire. These were his words, spoken on 16th January last year at Johannesburg—

> "It is clear to me, and no doubt to you, that an overwhelming popular opinion in this very Colony is opposed to any solution of that kind. You have first to convert them. Then you will have seen that the other great Colonies of the Empire and the opinions of the mother-country herself regard a step of the kind as retrograde and dangerous."

I do not always agree with the right hon. Gentleman, but I cordially echo the sentiments he uttered in Johannesburg. In July, 1903, in answer to that, came, as I have told the House, the unanimous Resolution of both Houses of the Cape Parliament—

> "Ministers are convinced that sufficient labour is available and can be secured, not only for working the mines in the Transvaal, but for all other requirements, if a fair wage be offered and considerate treatment in the way of housing and food be secured."

That was followed on 30th July by the African Labour League, who sent this telegram to the Governor—

> "African Labour League appreciates endeavours to prevent deplorable Chinese invasion. People in the Transvaal being rushed by forced depression. Commercial representation upon Labour Commission quite inadequate. Mining and Stock Exchange element predominate. Decision of question should be postponed until representative institutions established. Otherwise public opinion could not be honestly gauged."

On 17th August, the Cape Ministers, through the Governor, transmitted a further strongly-worded despatch. On 15th August the Pretoria Trades and Labour Council joined in the cry, and as late as 9th December last, Sir W. Hely-Hutchinson telegraphed to the present Colonial Secretary stating that—

> "The feeling against this does not decrease."

More than that, at Kimberley on 15th December there was a meeting—the largest ever held at Kimberley—against the importation of Chinese labour; and on 17th December, a similar meeting was held in Cape Town. Lord Milner then set to work to deny that this was a genuine opposition. In spite of all this, he telegraphed, on 3rd January this year, to the Colonial Secretary—

> "Great change in public opinion in Transvaal. Quite a minority against it at the Cape. Opposition quite clearly due to electioneering. Both parties competing against one another in protesting against Asiatic labour."

A stronger proof of the general feeling I can hardly conceive. Dr. Jameson, the new Prime Minister, telegraphed on 4th January last confirming and insisting upon the Resolution passed by both Houses on 17th August, 1903. And on 20th Febuary there was this Minute from the Cape Ministers—

> "No sincere effort has been made to secure labour."

The language is not mine, but that of His Majesty's Ministers at the Cape. What does Lord Milner say to this? On 11th January he sent the most remarkable despatch that I think has ever been forwarded to the home country by a Governor occupying a position which should be above and independent of all parties. It was as follows—

> "The Bond working the anti-Chinese cry for all that it is worth and the anti-British newspapers from Cape Town to the Zambesi fulminating in chorus against Asiatic importation at the Cape. The majority of the Boers are anti-Asiatic, not from any interest, but in order to "dish" Progressives. The Progressives have been forced to try and compete with the Bond in anti-Asiatic fervour. But it is quite evident that many of them are doing this without conviction."

It appears, my Lords, that there is no honest politician on either side at the Cape, and that honesty, integrity, and independence lie solely with Lord Milner. That is followed hot-foot by telegrams from New Zealand and the Commonwealth of Australia, protesting that they would never have helped us in the war if they had known that it was going to lead to the importation of Chinese into the Transvaal. And what does Lord Milner say on 29th January? He goes from strength to strength and says—

> "Local opposition to Labour Ordinance apparently extinct."

That is followed by something which proves to demonstration that his conclusion is erroneous. I refer to the impressive protest on 10th February from the leading Boers of the Colony—General de la Rey, General Botha, Smutz, and others whose names are familiar as having been leaders in the war against us, and who speak of this as—

> "A public calamity of the first magnitude."

Had that protest any impression upon the mind of Lord Milner? Not at all. The next day he telegraphed home to say—

> "Opinion not the least affected."

I should be surprised to hear what would impress him. He continued—

> "Boers not unfavourable; many are strongly in favour of it. If they saw a chance of making political capital out of the opposition to imported labour the temptation would be too strong."

There is a very easy way out of that, which is to take the opinion of the Transvaal itself. In six months you could get a ballot. It is stated that it would take six months to prepare the list of voters. But Lord Milner would rather not wait. That ballot would show—and, perhaps, it is the only thing that could show definitely—whether all these demonstrations of popular opinion are ignorant or dishonest, or whether Lord Milner is mistaken in the view he holds. Meanwhile, protests come from all parts of Cape Colony, and the only way in which Lord Milner alludes to them is, on 25th January, that—

> "They are of interest"

—and why?—

> "Because they betray ignorance."

The High Commissioner in South Africa is quite entitled to his own opinion, however obstinate or wrong—that only effects our estimate of the accuracy of his statements and the value of his judgment—but what I venture to submit to the House is, that he is not entitled to bring groundless and ungenerous accusations of ignorance or craft against all who differ from him, merely because they differ.

I do not propose to discuss the question of the position of the Chinaman when once imprisoned in the compound. That was referred to the other day, and no doubt other speakers will discuss it in the course of this debate. But you cannot stop at the Rand. I understand that His Majesty's Government are proposing to introduce the same thing into Rhodesia. If you introduce it into Rhodesia, can you stop there? Can you prevent the coal mines and the railways from demanding similar cheap labour? And I want to put this question to those who know South Africa far better than I do. Have they considered whether or not they are running the risk of a great Kaffir uprising—an uprising which will be different from all others in that country, inasmuch as it will have the secret or open sympathy of many, if not of most, of the white men, Boer and British, in the Colony? But besides and beyond this there is a moral aspect to the question. You are incarcerating together in a compound, for three years, men in the prime of life. It is said that they are to bring their wives with them. The most rev. Primate the other day, however, said he was assured they would not. He said that a captain whom he had consulted, and whose judgment he relied upon, had stated that they would not bring them. I doubt whether a single woman will leave China, because, of course, the object of every recruiter will be to recruit only men who have no domestic encumbrances. They frankly admit that their object is to make as much money as they can. They will not sacrifice dividends for the sake of these domestic encumbrances. Money, not morality, is the chief factor in the minds of these financiers.

Lord Coleridge.

I do ask—Have right rev. Prelates nothing to say to this? I understood the right rev. Primate the other night to refrain from outspoken condemnation on the plea of necessity. Necessity is a very old plea, and if the most rev. Primate will look in his "Paradise Lost" he will see who first raised it. I think we ought to consider whether it is right or wrong, and not the necessity or supposed necessity of it. I appeal, even at this last hour, to the most rev. Primate, in his great official position, and with the great personal respect which he commands in this House and elsewhere, to speak in bold, clear, unqualified condemnation of this traffic. If he does, I believe that even now he might stop it. But if he does not, then I am afraid we must sorrowfully admit that the people outside have come to a clear conclusion on the moral aspect of the question unaided by any spiritual guidance whatever from the bishops. It is not only true to say that the people disapprove of this policy

They have a positive detestation of it. There has never been put forward so unpopular a policy in my lifetime. I know of no other policy of which it could be said, with truth, that you cannot hold a meeting in its favour in any place in the United Kingdom. It is abhorrent to the people at home, it will bring the fame of this country into discredit with the Empire beyond the seas, and not only with the Empire, but with the rest of the civilised world.

Moved to resolve, "That this House disapproves of the importation of Chinese labourers into the Transvaal under the recent Ordinance until the grant to that country of full representative government."—(*The Lord Coleridge.*)

*Lord STANMORE, who had given notice "To call the attention of tho House to a communicaion recently addressed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Society of Friends," said, My Lords, I had intended to have called your attention last night to a remarkable document which has been issued by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, but it was suggested to me that it would be better to bring the matter on to-night so that this question and the Motion of my noble friend behind me might be discussed together. A short time ago my noble friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said, what, if I may venture to say so without impertinence, appeared to me to be one of the truest and most sensible things that have been said on this question in this House. The noble Marquess cast aside the pretence which has been put forward that the Ordinance by which, in this case, Chinese labour is to be regulated is essentially similar to those Ordinances which regulate immigration in other colonies. He said, and said with truth, that the circumstances of the Transvaal are very different from those of other coolie-importing colonies, and that the circumstances under which labour was to be introduced being different, it was only natural that the Ordinance which provided for its introduction should be different also. I heard that with much satisfaction, and I have no doubt that my noble friends who share the same opinions as myself heard it with equal satisfaction. We felt that by that admission all unnecessary wrangling as to whether this Ordinance was like some other Ordinance, or whether such and such a provision was better than, or worse than, some other provision in another land, might be set aside and disregarded, and that the only question we had really to consider was whether the provisions of this Ordinance were in themselves just and equitable.

But our satisfaction was of very short duration. Two or three days after the words were out of the mouth of the noble Marquess, the Secretary of State for the Colonies wrote a letter to the Society of Friends, in which he absolutely threw over the doctrine the noble Marquess laid down, and insisted on the almost exact similarity of the Ordinance which is to introduce labourers into South Africa to those that introduced them into other colonies. The letter is a remarkable one for another reason. It consists mainly of what may be called two sneers—the first is a sneer, and a very undeserved one, upon that most respectable body the Society of Friends. It chooses to assume what the writer of the letter must, I think, know he had no sufficient ground to assume, that the members of the Society of Friends oppose coloured immigration under all circumstances and in all places; and on the strength of that covert sneer, he proceeds to an open sneer at my noble friend sitting near me (the Marquess of Ripon), and at noble Lords on the other side of the House also, to the effect that those who had approved of Immigration Ordinances in other colonies had no right to object to this Ordinance. I will leave the two Secretaries of State to arrange their difference of opinion between themselves—an occupation, by the way, in which by this time His Majesty's Ministers must have become tolerably proficient—and will merely notice that the interpretation of the Secretary of State for the Colonies has been reinforced by the interpretation of Lord Milner. He has taken up the same view of similarity, and, in answering a deputation which waited upon him with regard to this subject, he not only repeated that view, but, as my noble and learned friend Lord Coleridge said, charged all those who took an opposite view with ignorance, including, I suppose, the noble

Marquess the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Now, my Lords, I do not pretend to be less ignorant than my betters, still less do I profess to be wiser than my neighbours; but, after all, experience derived from eighteen years close personal observation of the practical working of Immigration Laws in the West Indies, in Mauritius, in the Pacific, in Ceylon, counts for something; and it is because of that experience that I feel myself compelled, not without reluctance, to warn your Lordships as solemnly as I can that this Ordinance involves a new departure, and, I fear, a departure on a dangerous and downward road. This, my Lords, is the essential difference—it is one which has not been alluded to in the course of these debates, but it is far-reaching and most important—that all the restrictions, whether they be mild or whether they be severe, which have been imposed in former Immigration Ordinances in other parts of the world, have had one object, and one object only, namely, that of securing that the work which the labourer has contracted to do shall be done. All the restrictions have been for that purpose and that purpose alone. But in this unfortunate Ordinance the restrictions are not confined to effecting that purpose; they are directed to a totally different object. They are restrictions, imposed not to make certain that the work shall be performed, but imposed because the labourers are Asiatics. You enter there on a course of restrictions, not to enforce a contract, but to gratify the prejudices, the fears, and the pride of race and colour. That makes an essential difference in the whole spirit of the legislation in the one and the other case.

I have pointed out that the spirit and the object of these Ordinances are wholly different, and yet Lord Milner tells us they are precisely similar. Now, of the 150 Ordinances which the Secretary of State for the Colonies has quoted, can he produce one in which the labourers are brought over by a private importer and then—not sold, indeed—but "transferred" by him, at his own pleasure, in batches of such number as he shall choose, to private proprietors of mines? No, he cannot. Can he find one in which the condition of those labourers, when they have been imported, is one of close imprisonment, ending, at the conclusion of their indenture, with their being returned to their own country by compulsion? No, my Lords. Among all those 150 Ordinances he will not find one with those provisions. Nor, again, will he find among them one in which there is not some provision with regard to the minimum of wages and the maximum of work. Nor will he find one in which the labourers are not entitled to holidays as of right. He will not find one in which their holidays are limited to such days only as the employer may choose. There is no compulsion upon the employer in this Ordinance, and he may not choose to give a holiday from one end of the year to the other. I maintain that there is no such provision to be found in any of the other Ordinances. Is there any Ordinance among them all in which there is a prohibition on the labourer to own property? Is there any one in which there is a prohibition to rise in the world by employment at other labour Is there one in which a man is prohibited from rising even in the work in which he is engaged? Is there one in which there is a list of minor and subordinate posts, actually connected with manual labour, to which it is provided that these unfortunate people shall not under any circumstances rise? No this list of occupations and this minute care that immigrants shall not be employed in any kind of position of superiority are totally absent from any Immigration Ordinance. But, as I have said, it is not a matter of detail, not a matter of whether this or that provision is more or less desirable. There is an essential difference between the enactment of provisions to enforce the performance of a labour contract, and the enforcement of restrictions which are made to seclude and segregate these people from the rest of the population, and which are imposed on them from the fact that they are alien labourers and not because it is necessary to compel them to do the work they have stipulated to do.

I shall very likely be charged with rhetorical exaggeration in having said that the period of the indentured labourer's stay in the Colony would be one of perpetual imprisonment. There is no one who more dislikes rhetorical exaggeration than I do. But that is no rhetorical exaggeration. At least, I think not. Let me quote, in proof of that, what the Secretary of State for the Colonies recently said in the House of Commons. An hon. Member asked some questions with regard to what would be done with the children of mixed parentage. The answer was that there would be no children of mixed parentage. Now, what does that mean? How can the Secretary of State for the Colonies, or anyone else, say that there shall be no children of mixed parentage in the Transvaal, unless it is meant that the Chinese population introduced is to be so closely imprisoned, so closely watched, that there shall be no opportunities for any intercourse whatever between them and the general population of the country. If that is not close imprisonment I do not know what is. I think that the cool statement of the Secretary of State for the Colonies that there will be no children of mixed parentage is a very remarkable and a very formidable one, and, in view of that statement, which means, if it means anything, that from 10,000 to 100,000 Chinese imported labourers will be kept under close supervision and imprisoned in these compounds, I would venture to say that the moral state of things that will arise can hardly be called altogether satisfactory. I would ask the most rev. Primate most earnestly to consider what the full meaning of that statement of the Colonial Secretary's is; what the full consequences of such a segregation as is there implied means; and whether he can feel that, as far as the moral question is concerned, the arrangements of the Government can be considered satisfactory.

I have said that it was with reluctance that I ventured to address to the House a warning as to the new departure it is taking. It is with reluctance, because I have no sympathy whatever with those who would try to confound slavery with the system of indentured labour. There is no comparison between them. Indentured labour is a totally different thing from slavery. I have no sympathy with those who indulge in that exaggeration, and I am reluctant, therefore, to say anything that may seem to tell against indentured labour. I have as little sympathy, I confess, with those who wish altogether to prevent the introduction of Chinese labour, supposing it to be necessary, out of any idea that white labour can ever replace coloured labour in the Transvaal. That I believe to be utterly chimerical. I believe that the introduction of coloured labour of some sort is necessary; but, if you introduce it, for heaven's sake introduce it under fair and proper conditions as regards the persons imported! Do not go out of your way to depart from old usage. Give them as much liberty as possible, and do not impose restrictions on them because of the race to which they belong. It seems to me that a strange change has come over public feeling in this country. Fifty years ago this Chinese Ordinance would have been looked upon from a different light from that in which it is now viewed. On 22nd March, 1858, I happened to be occupying a place on the steps of the Throne, and heard Lord Brougham raise a question with regard to an Immigration Ordinance which had then just been passed in Jamaica. That Ordinance, as Immigration Ordinances went, was a very good one on the whole; but Lord Brougham objected to certain details in it which, he said, pressed with undue severity on the immigrant. The place now occupied by my noble friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies was then filled by the late Lord Carnarvon. He took a little time to consider the matter, and then informed Lord Brougham that, having looked into it, the Jamaica Ordinance certainly contained some very good provisions, but was open to some of the objections that had been raised, and consequently the Queen would be advised to disallow it. And yet that Ordinance was as whips are to scorpions compared to this Transvaal Ordinance.

I do not know whether it is the case now, but for the thirty years that I myself happened to be a Colonial Governor the Governors received, on obtaining their appointment, a Commission under the Great Seal which conferred on them certain powers, and also Instructions under the Royal Sign Manual which limited and defined the exercise of those powers. Now, in those Instructions the Governors were told not to assent to certain classes of Ordinance. They were not to assent to any Ordinance, for instance, which debased the coinage, which was contrary to treaty obligations, and then, among others, came this Royal Order—

> "You are not to assent in our name to any Ordinance whereby persons not being of European descent or parentage are subjected to restrictions or disqualifications to which persons of European descent and parentage are not equally subject."

I should like very much to know whether those are the instructions of the Governor of the Transvaal. If they are, they are at singular variance with the Ordinance we have been discussing; and if they are not, it would be curious to know when and why they ceased to form a part of those instructions. We of late years have heard a great deal—possibly too much—about Imperialism, but about that Instruction which I have quoted there is a ring of true and noble Imperialism—the fiat that in no part of the dominions of the Crown shall there be established that most odious of aristocracies, an aristocracy of colour. For, depend upon it, that is what is at the bottom in this case. These restrictions are imposed because, at the time when you go to these Chinamen, praying them to come and help you, you are determined that they shall not occupy in the Colony which they are begged to help the position which, as men, they are entitled to occupy. I say as men, because one of the rights which it is supposed a man cannot abnegate is the right to hold property. If you must have Chinese or Indians have them by all means, but have them upon a sound law. By agreeing to restrictions which are not to enforce the compact but to seclude one race from access to another, you are entering upon a step which leads, if not to slavery, to those practices analogous to slavery, which Lord Grey, when Minister for the Colonies and all through his long life, so vehemently denounced.

As to the Motion before the House, I confess I cannot give my vote in its favour. The whole question is, Is it necessary or is it not that Asiatic labour should be introduced into the Transvaal? If it is necessary, I should say that the sooner it is done the better, and that the existing Legislature of the time is the one to pass it. On the question of necessity I have not been able honestly to form an opinion. I cannot say whether it is necessary or not. I am prepared, so far as the abstract necessity for importing Eastern labour goes, to accept the decision of the Government of the Transvaal and the Government of this country; but not unless that importation is fairly conducted, and conducted without the influence of race prejudice and colour hatred, which certainly lie at the bottom of this Ordinance.

*THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The DUKE of MARLBOROUGH): My Lords, I am indeed gratified to hear that the noble Lord who has just sat down does not agree with the terms of the Motion which has been proposed by the noble and learned Lord opposite. I confess that in the speech of the noble and learned Lord there appeared to me to be an undercurrent that it was His Majesty's Government themselves who had initiated this Ordinance and forced it upon the unwilling Dutch and English population of the Transvaal. That is not the case. The question that we have been called upon to solve is this: whether we are to allow, or to disallow, others in the Crown Colony to import Chinese for work of a specific and definite character. We are aware that this measure has lent itself to a considerable amount of misconstruction and misrepresentation in the country. In making that observation, I do not refer to noble Lords opposite; indeed, the arguments and views they have expressed have been couched in very reasonable and proper terms; but in the country and elsewhere it has been very different. We thoroughly realise the prejudice, and, indeed, the passion, that this Ordinance has created. The noble and learned Lord has said that no meeting can be held in this country in favour of the importation of Chinese labour. The noble and learned Lord's experience is dissimilar to my own. I know of meetings which have been held which have expressed contrary views to those which the noble and learned Lord has stated, and I thoroughly believe that no meeting where the matter was put forward simply and plainly would receive the proposition with that disapproval which the noble and learned Lord seems to imagine.

It is true that the Government themselves have little to look forward to in this matter. We know that we have enabled those who are opposed to the Government to stir up resentment and ill-feeling in the minds of many of those whose sympathies we desire not to lose or to alienate. We have nothing to comfort us in this matter except the knowledge that we have approached the subject with the sole object of doing our best conscientiously for the interests of the Colony. We believe, rightly or wrongly, that the importation of Chinese, and this Ordinance which authorises it, will be for the benefit of those who reside in the Transvaal. We shall not shirk from the duty which we believe we have to perform, in spite of the prejudice, the partisanship, and the passion which unfortunately the subject has created in this country. I think our duty in this matter is pretty clear. In the first place we have to decide whether this demand on the part of the Transvaal for the importation of Chinese is a reasonable one, whether the conditions necessitating the importation of these labourers really do exist. We regard this point as clearly proved by the Report of the Labour Commission, that there is a lack of labour in South Africa. It was pointed out in the Majority Report that those districts in South Africa from which you might expect to obtain labour required the labour for themselves, and it was established beyond all doubt that it was impossible to get a large number of natives from that part of Central Africa to which the noble and learned Lord referred. The noble and learned Lord said he did not quarrel with the composition of the Labour Commission.

LORD COLERIDGE: I did not say that. I said that in the circumstances it was impossible to get a Commission of persons without preconceived ideas.

*THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH: I will not labour that point. The noble and learned Lord said that the mine-owners had not done their best to get sufficient labour for their requirements. Indeed, he went further and said there had been a desire on their part to show that it was impossible to get labour in South Africa in order that they might obtain cheaper labour from Asia. Only half the stamps in existence in Johannesburg are working to-day, and if they were all at work it would mean an addition to the wealth of the Transvaal of £10,000,000 a year and the employment of something like 5,000 skilled white artisans, earning over £2,000,000 a year in wages; notwithstanding these facts, the noble and learned Lord is prepared to state that our fellow-kinsmen in South Africa are deliberately trying to prevent an adequate supply of labour being introduced in order that they may go abroad and obtain cheaper labour. Then the noble and learned Lord stated that one of the reasons why labour had not been forthcoming, was that the Kaffirs had been badly treated in the mines. I think he said the wages were low and the Kaffirs were not properly attended to. I would remind him that the wages which the Kaffirs receive to-day are between 50s. and 60s. a month, a considerably higher wage than that which they received under the Dutch Government before the war. As to their ill-treatment, I read a document only recently setting forth the manner in which they were taken care of, and I absolutely deny the statement of the noble and learned Lord that the Kaffirs in Johannesburg are not properly and adequately provided for.

LORD COLERIDGE: It was not my statement, but that of the witnesses before the Commission.

*THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH: The noble and learned Lord was quite accurate in stating that the deaths among the Kaffirs on the mines amounted to 70 per thousand, but the reason of that is perfectly easy to explain. There was a great epidemic of influenza at the time, which carried off an abnormal number of Kaffirs, and when that epidemic passed away the percentage of deaths was considerably reduced. The noble and learned Lord quoted instances in which the Transvaal Labour Bureau had disagreed with others with whom they came in contact. I need not enter into that matter. The noble and learned Lord read many paragraphs in connection with it, and I think it is quite clear that there was a certain amount of dispute and ill-feeling between the two parties concerned which was not very pertinent to the question of recruiting. Our next duty in this matter is, I think, to be sure that this measure is in conformity with the wishes of the people themselves. Your Lordships will remember that the Legislative Council had this Ordinance before them for many weeks. They discussed it thoroughly, and it was eventually passed without a division. I understood from the noble and learned Lord that he did not think that Lord Milner's opinion, nor, indeed, the opinion of the Legislative Council, reflected the wishes and desires, in their entirety, of the people of the Transvaal. When last year the War Contribution Loan Bill was before Parliament, no one suggested that a referendum ought to be taken in the Transvaal in order to discover whether the people who promised the contribution really represented the wishes of the population. But while the noble Lord will accept these persons as representative when it is a question of receiving something, he declines to trust them at all when they ask for the means of developing their industry.

His Majesty's Government believe, and I think many noble Lords in this House will agree, that the members of the Legislative Council do represent and reflect the wishes of the people of the Transvaal in this matter. They have passed this Ordinance, and they believe that it is the wish of the majority of the people that it should be put into operation. I am reminded that only as recently as the other day the views of the Legislative Council were justified by a representative deputation which was received by Lord Milner. The deputation comprised some 300 delegates from thirty-seven meetings held at the mines, and twenty-eight representative bodies, including the Johannesburg and other municipalities, the Chambers of Trade and Commerce, and mining, scientific, and technical associations. That deputation expressed their anxiety at the delay in the ratification of the Labour Ordinance, and their concern lest it should not pass. There is also the testimony of the Bishop of Pretoria in support of the view of the Legislative Council. One might suppose that the view of the Bishop of Pretoria might be opposed to the acceptance of this measure, but, on the contrary, he telegraphed expressing his regret at his inability to be present, but declaring his belief that the introduction of Asiatic labour, under Government regulations, was the only solution of the difficulty. There is the still more remarkable expression of opinion of the members of the Free Church in South Africa, who have sent a communication to their brethren in this country imploring them not to take a hostile view of this matter. They further stated that they did not think their brethren in this country thoroughly understood the question. The sequel was, that their brethren here passed a resolution in which they expressed the opinion that their brethren in South Africa ought to be removed from the membership of the Free Church.

I pass to another point raised by the noble and learned Lord in connection with the question of white labour. The noble and learned Lord reminded us again of Mr. Tarbutt's letter. I confess I thought we had finished with Mr. Tarbutt's letter. We had it read to us at the commencement of these debates, but the noble and learned Lord has again brought it forward, and I do not think there is anything to add to what has been said with regard to that letter. I understood the noble and learned Lord to say that the mine-owners were, in the first instance, favourable to the employment of white labour; that no question was at that time raised as to its cost, but that subsequently they determined, for political reasons, that it would be unwise to try the experiment. The noble and learned Lord forgets that the very first person in South Africa who attempted to use white labour was Sir Percy Fitzpatrick. At the conclusion of the war he wrote to Lord Kitchener and asked that he might be allowed to have any soldiers who were not required to work in the mines. What has been the experience of the mine-owners as to the employment of white labour? They have found that the cost is too great. It has been conclusively proved by the experts, by the engineers, by everybody who understands this particular question, that white labour is too expensive to be employed in large quantities. If the noble and learned Lord will look through this bulky Blue-book he will see telegrams and expressions of opinion on behalf of the Transvaal Government showing that we ourselves tried to use white labour on the railways. We sent men from these shores to South Africa and they worked there for several months, but our experience conclusively proved that we could get the work carried out much better and considerably cheaper by local labour.

His Majesty's Government are satisfied that this Ordinance is not opposed to the wishes of the people of the Transvaal, that, on the contrary, if it had been disallowed it would have created a widespread feeling of apprehension in the Transvaal, and of irritation on the part of the population that Parliament and the public in general did not thoroughly appreciate and understand the extraordinary labour difficulties that of late have been created in South Africa. I confess that nothing in these debates, and nothing which has fallen from the noble and learned Lord this evening, has in any way shaken our confidence in our original contention, which we believe is thoroughly supported by facts, and we do not think that those facts have in any way been disproved by the noble and learned Lord. All the facts connected with this problem have been fully debated in both Houses of Parliament. A majority in the other House accorded its support to the Government, and I believe that when this question was first discussed in this House a similar result would have taken place if we had been pressed to a division. Our opinion in this matter has not been in the least shaken. We believe that the demand for labour is real and genuine, and that the conditions of the Ordinance are humane and not demoralising. We believe, also, that the experiment has behind it the goodwill of the Colony itself, and that it encounters no serious opposition from other parts of South Africa less closely connected.

We admit that our responsibility in this matter does not rest here. Let us for a moment examine the situation. On the one hand you have in South Africa a number of employers who are anxious to obtain a greater supply of labour; and, on the other hand, you have in China a number of Chinamen who are anxious to lend out their services for a remunerative and a better wage than they are able to get in their own country. Judging from the observations of the noble and learned Lord it would seem to be wrong to have any dealings with Chinese at all. If an employer in this country was anxious to secure the services of foreigners, under a system of contract, no objection could be taken. Why should the thing be inherently wrong when the employer is in South Africa and the employee is a Chinaman? If the industry had been cotton or wheat-growing no one would have said that the demand for labour was based on morally bad principles. But because the individual concerned is yellow, and the industry is gold mining, the principle as to whether the immigration is legitimate or illegitimate is entirely lost sight of, and a prejudice is created, not against the principle itself, but against the nationality of the individual and the nature of his work. I confess that in these debates we have heard most interesting speeches from many noble Lords, but we have heard hardly any expression of opinion from noble Lords on the Front Bench opposite. There is not a single noble Lord on the front Opposition Bench who has spoken on this subject except the noble Marquess (The Marquess of Ripon). There was, of course, Lord Carrington, but he, if I may use a naval analogy, commands the torpedo boat of the political fleet of noble Lords opposite, and his action, although, no doubt, very brave indeed, does not necessarily conform to the general movements of the political fleet. We want to know what the views are of those on the political flagship opposite. I have a profound respect for the views of the noble Earl the Leader of the Opposition, although I do not always agree with them. The noble Earl occupies an extremely important position in the Party to which noble Lords opposite belong. He is not *primus inter pares;* his position may be described as *facile princeps.* I should like to know whether he thinks there is anything inherently wrong in principle in the desire of employers of labour in South Africa to import, under a system of contract, Chinamen from China. I hope the noble Earl will let us know whether he endorses and supports the somewhat wild and mischievous statements which have been spread throughout the country on many a platform in connection with this subject. I repeat that there is nothing inherently wrong in principle in the immigration of Chinese labourers into South Africa.

I now come to the point raised by my noble friend Lord Stanmore. The noble Lord complained of the letter that the Society of Friends received from the Secretary of State, and he further claimed that there was a total difference of principle between the Chinese Ordinance and the Ordinances passed for the West Indies. It is perfectly true that there are certain differences, but the differences are due chiefly to the nature of the case—that is to say, whereas a coolie is employed in agriculture or in sugar planting in the West Indies, a Chinaman is to be employed in South Africa in the gold-mines. Except for that consideration, the two Ordinances are similar in principle; and I cannot agree with the view that the difference is more than a difference of degree. In each case the labourer is indentured for a period of years—in the Trinidad Ordinance it is for five years, and in the South African Ordinance for three years, and possibly three more. In each case his residence is circumscribed, whether it be the plantation in the West Indies or the location or Chinese village in South Africa. I do not know whether my noble friend would complain of the difference in size between a Chinese village and a plantation, but I notice in the Trinidad Ordinance that the plantation may be as small as five acres in extent, whereas the Chinese

village in South Africa may be as large as two miles in extent. In each case, leave of absence is fixed by regulation. The labourer in the West Indies may have twenty-five days leave of absence in a year; in South Africa the Chinaman may have forty-eight hours leave, which may be renewed at the discretion of the employer.

LORD STANMORE: The number of days granted in the Trinidad Ordinance are as of right, but the forty-eight hours in the Chinese Ordinance is an indulgence at the will of the employer.

*THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH: In each case the transfer of the indentured labourer is supervised. In the West Indies he cannot be transferred without the consent of the Governor of the Colony; in South Africa, not only can he not be transferred without the consent of the Governor but the consent of the labourer himself is also required. In the West Indies there is a clause in the Ordinance to this effect, that the owner is entitled to sell his plantation and also the labour of the labourers upon it to any one he chooses. That is a stringent regulation, and one which has been in operation for thirty or forty years past and during the time noble Lords opposite were in office, and so far as I am aware they never complained of that regulation. In the Transvaal Ordinance, as well as in the West Indian Ordinances, provision is made for the health and well-being of the indentured labourer, and in each case the labourer has to conform to the regulations laid down. The similarity in principle between the provisions in the South African Ordinance and those in the Ordinances in the West Indies certainly did not justify the description contained in the letter of the Society of Friends that they are nearly allied to slavery. The Government are bound to exercise control in order to see that the contract is based on proper terms and on terms which are humane. The Chinese are, in a sense, the weaker party to the contract, and it is our duty to see that they are not misled by offers of work not being properly stated. It is our duty to see that they are properly transported, that their wives and families are also properly transported to their new homes, and that they are properly housed and cared for when they take up their new quarters.

All these considerations have been raised in your Lordships' House, and perhaps I may remind the noble Lords of the pledges in connection with this matter which were given by the Colonial Secretary. All the regulations made under the Ordinances are not yet available, but the first pledge of the Secretary of State was that all reasonable facilities will be given for the introduction, reception, and accommodation of the families of labourers. It has been decided that the labourer may bring his wife and children with him, but if he chooses to leave his wife at home he can send for her subsequently, and the cost of transport will be provided by the mine managers. All that we ask the labourer to do is to notify in South Africa that he is a married man, so that they can make adequate provision for him in case he wishes his wife to join him. The next pledge which the Secretary of State gave was that the transfer of the labourer from one employer to another should not take place without the labourer's consent. The regulations, as I have already ventured to remind your Lordships, require not only the consent of the Governor-General, but also that of the labourer himself before his labour can be transferred from one employer to another, and, furthermore, friends and associates will be kept together in each group of mines as far as it is possible compatible with the requirements of the mine managers. The next pledge given by the Secretary of State was that every precaution would be used to secure the proper treatment of labourers on the voyage. Their proper treatment will be provided for by a surgeon accompanying every ship, and the captain must obtain a certificate proving that the accommodation of his ship is in all respects satisfactory. Perhaps the most important pledge of all which was given by the Secretary of State was that an officer would be appointed by the Transvaal Government to go to China to see that every labourer fully understands the nature of his engagement. I may say that an officer selected by the Transvaal Government will go to China and explain the provisions of the contract to each labourer before it is signed, and the labourer is obliged to possess a copy of the contract signed by himself in his own language.

LORD COLERIDGE: Will the officer go into China or only to Hong-Kong?

***THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH**: It will depend at which port embarkation will take place. Furthermore, the Secretary of State has promised that the compound will be suitable for Asiatic labourers. It will be carefully prepared for them by those who are familiar with Asiatic customs. The labourer and his wife and family will be provided with medical attendance, and get his housing, water, fuel, and daily rations free of charge. My noble friend Lord Carrington is interested in this question, and perhaps would like to know the daily fare which the Chinaman is to receive. It will consist of one and a half pounds of rice, with half a pound of dried fish, half a pound of vegetables, and several ounces of tea. I have referred to the pledge which the Secretary of State has given and the methods in which it is proposed to carry them out, and I submit that all these facts are sufficient to dispose of noble Lords' objections to this Ordinance.

The debates in your Lordships' House have been frequent and protracted. Many speeches on this subject have been delivered, and I am not prepared to say that the discussion has been unprofitable or useless. Nor can the Government in any way resent the attention which has been paid to this subject. But I trust noble Lords will see that the Secretary of State has endeavoured to recognise every practical suggestion, no matter from what quarter it has emanated. I am willing to admit that the draft Ordinance and the regulations, so far as they have been drawn up, have gained in more ways than one by the labours that noble Lords in this House have expended upon the subject. Those who will be called upon to administer the Ordinance will realise the seriousness of their task by the fact that a strong and vigilant public opinion in this country will watch their discharge of them. That alone is a great security.

Speaking for those who sit on the Government Bench, I can say that we willingly and readily recognise the effort that has been made by noble Lords opposite in so far as they have been inspired by lofty considerations of humanity and morality. But elsewhere, where those efforts have been directed for the purpose of creating prejudice and passion, and, furthermore, where there has been a desire to seize upon a difficult and complex question of Colonial Office administration and to use it as a counter for furthering the cause of a political Party in the State, it is impossible for noble Lords on this side of the House to accord to the authors a similar measure of congratulation.

EARL SPENCER : My Lords, I desire at the outset to congratulate the noble Duke on the spirited and able speech which he has just delivered. The noble Duke was certainly under a disadvantage in this respect, that, although practice makes perfect, it is rather difficult when one subject is repeatedly brought on, to find new arguments. My noble friend has, I think, acquitted himself most admirably, and the House has derived much pleasure in listening to his speech. The noble Duke very generously referred to his principal critics in this House and admitted that their action has been of considerable benefit to the Ordinance and the regulations under it. I thank him for so generously making that allusion. The noble Duke was, however, I think, mistaken as to the undercurrent which he said he found in the speech of the noble and learned Lord behind me, who was accused of having suggested that His Majesty's Government had initiated this policy. I did not understand my noble and learned friend to differ in any way from the noble Duke as to the actual position of His Majesty's Government in this matter. The matter was not initiated here but in the Transvaal, and it was only on the representation of Lord Milner and others in the Transvaal that His Majesty's Government's responsibility began at all. The noble Duke made a somewhat playful allusion to Lord Carrington and myself. He said that I represented the political flagship, and he rather complained that I had not spoken before on this subject. I do not consider that it is my business to intervene in every debate, especially when other members of my Party who have held high office and know probably more, from official experience, than I do of the subject take part. But the noble Duke was not correct in saying that I had not expressed my view on this question, because in my speech on the Address, where it is often necessary to touch on a variety of subjects, I did allude to this Ordinance. The main point of my argument then was that, whatever opinion we might ourselves hold on a question of this sort, it made all the difference in the world whether the Colony was a self-governing colony or a Crown colony, and I denied the possibility of arriving at the real opinion of the Colony until they had representative government.

I quite admit that any individual or company is entitled to employ Chinamen if they like, but what I do maintain is that it entirely depends on the conditions under which they are employed. My noble friend said there was a great deal of prejudice about this, and that if it had not been for the fact that yellow labour was involved and that this industry was connected with gold mining, there would not have been half the tumult that has arisen. I entirely deny that. I maintain that the opposition to it depends on the conditions under which this labour is to be employed. I at once admit that the regulations will probably improve the Ordinance; at the same time considerable doubt is entertained by noble Lords on this side of the House and by my noble friend Lord Stanmore, who has had unrivalled experience in this matter, whether regulations hold the same legal position as the Ordinance. What does the Ordinance do even with the amending regulations ? Are the conditions exactly what a liberty-loving people would approve of ? Is there any parallel to these regulations in any part of the world ? When asked that very Question in the House of Commons, the Secretary of State for the Colonies answered very shortly "No." Let us look at one or two of the regulations. There is a clause in the Ordinance which enacts that if a labourer goes out of the compound and is living in another house he may be arrested and prosecuted, and any person who harbours him may also be prosecuted and convicted. It may be an exaggeration to call that slavery, but I venture to say there are conditions about it which are of a servile or semi-servile nature. The noble Duke has said that he has found meetings—I do not know where they are, certainly not in Dorsetshire—where resolutions could be carried in favour of the Government's policy. The feeling of the people in this country is very strong in regard to liberty and freedom. They consider that every part of the territory of His Majesty is sacred to freedom, and anybody who puts his foot on British territory has a right to be defended, and cannot, unless he is proved to be guilty of some great crime, be given up to the State to which he belongs.

There is, I admit, force in the argument that the importation of Chinese labour is not a movement against white labour. But I cannot help thinking, after a perusal of the Blue-book, that there is something political in the movement. The mine-owners seem to be afraid of the increase of white labour in the Transvaal on account of its probable political results. No doubt there is a shortage of labour for the mines, but the Minority Report of the Labour Commission makes out a strong case that there is much more Kaffir labour available in South Africa than people in this country generally suppose. Even the answers to Questions on the subject in the House of Commons show that Kaffir labour in the mines is increasing. The De Beers mine has no difficulty whatever in obtaining all the Kaffir labour it requires, because the natives receive high wages and are very well looked after there. I believe that the laws which have been passed by the Transvaal Government imposing a capitation tax on the Kaffir and another tax for the plurality of wives, though passed with the object of inducing the natives to work in the mines, has had the contrary effect of keeping them away from the mines. In June of last year Lord Milner said—

> "To listen to some of the extreme advocates of Asiatic labour one would think that this place was on the verge of total ruin. The production of gold now is greater than in 1895 or 1896, when the Transvaal was already, and had been for some time, the marvel of the world in the matter of gold production. The world progresses, no doubt, but what was fabulous wealth seven years ago is not abject poverty to-day. Not only that, the rate of production is increasing."

Why, then, is it necessary to force an extra production by the importation of Chinese labour? Is it because it is desired that great fortunes should be made in a short time? Cannot the mine-owners wait until the market has become more settled? I protest against a course of action so fraught with evil being taken merely for the sake of increasing the output of gold so that a few men may make their fortunes rapidly.

The noble Duke has said that the conditions imposed in the Ordinance are humane. But are they consistent with full liberty? It is also said by the noble Duke that there is no serious opposition to the importation of the Chinese into South Africa. What is meant by that? In Cape Colony, which surely is the most important part of South Africa, both political Parties are strongly opposed to it. There is little doubt that the financial position of the Transvaal is very critical, and it is feared that unless something is done at once there will be severe suffering in the Colony. I admit that; but I think that those who cry out for the remedy of Chinese labour do not sufficiently look to the future nor consider what may be the consequences of that action. In my opinion, the consequences will be disastrous. I cannot help thinking that there is an intense feeling in many parts of that country against the introduction of Chinese labour. There is in one of the Blue-books a very strong statement from a number of Boer leaders. It may be said that these men have been, and still are, our enemies; but we must consider that they still have enormous influence in the country, and if they are opposed to this, as I believe it must be admitted they are, will not that be a profound and terrible difficulty to be met in the future? To pass an Ordinance of this kind, which is opposed by all the Dutch population and the leaders of the Dutch in the Transvaal, seems to me a very serious matter. We know that the lower stratum of the Chinese belong to a civilisation not as high as our own, and we know from experience in the Colonies and elsewhere that they are very often extremely immoral. If it is impossible to confine them in their cages, will not this immoral influence be very serious for the people of the country? These and other considerations seem to be so grave that I would not myself like to agree to an Ordinance of this sort, though it might for the moment relieve financial tension.

The SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of Lansdowne): Do I understand that the noble Earl used the word "cage"?

Earl SPENCER: Yes.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: I strongly protest against the use of that expression.

Earl SPENCER: I used the expression in a figurative sense. I think I am justified in using the word. The Chinese are to be restricted to particular districts. The cage may be a large one in some cases, but the Chinese must remain within certain limits and are deprived of that liberty of movement which is enjoyed by all people belonging to this country. I look with very grave apprehension to the passing of this Ordinance, even though amended by the regulations. I most earnestly wish that the Government could make up their minds, even now, to withhold this Ordinance, and to allow things to remain as they are, trusting to time and the development of Kaffir labour to do what is necessary for the mines. I do not for a moment say that we ought to neglect the mines. The mining industry is undoubtedly very important to the prosperity of the Colony, but it should not be developed in such a way as to be prejudicial to the true interests of the people.

Earl GREY: My Lords, I should like to congratulate the noble Duke, not only on his admirable speech, but also on having elicited from the noble Earl the Leader of the Opposition the statement that he is not opposed to the free importation of Chinamen into South Africa, but only to the conditions under which they come.

Earl SPENCER: I do not think I quite said that. I said that, however much one might dislike it, as I do, it made it much worse when the conditions are such as obtain in this case.

Earl Spencer.

Earl GREY: I do not think I have misrepresented the noble Earl. I suppose the noble Earl would prefer the free and unchecked influx of Chinese labour into the Transvaal to its admission under regulation.

Earl SPENCER: I am not in favour of it.

Earl GREY: Now, what are the conditions to which the noble Earl objects so strongly? He resents the idea that the Chinaman, or anybody else, should be confined to what he calls a "cage," but what would be much more correctly described as a garden city. I know some companies who are arranging that every Chinaman who is admitted to the compound shall have a garden plot of his own on which he can grow his vegetables. It is going rather far to say that the result will be demoralising if we do not prevent the Chinaman who earns a penny a day in China from earning 45s. a month in South Africa under conditions in which every care will be taken of his interests. The noble Earl the Leader of the Opposition referred in terms of enthusiasm to the arrangements made for the natives at Kimberley.

Earl SPENCER: No.

Earl GREY: I understood the noble Earl to point to the management of the natives at Kimberley as a proud example which could well be followed in other parts of South Africa.

Earl SPENCER: I said that at Kimberley they could attract the natives. I did not say it was an ideal place to go to.

Earl GREY: The noble Earl did quote it as a place where the natives were very well treated. I would point out that the native who goes into a compound on the De Beers mine is never allowed to leave it. There he is in a cage. But the Chinaman on the Rand, when he obtains a pass, is allowed to go where he pleases. The noble Earl appealed to the feeling of the House, and said it would be monstrous if a Chinaman who violated the conditions of his employment, and left his compound without a permit, should be imprisoned. Is not the man in His Majesty's Navy and in the Army in very much the same position? If he is under orders not to leave his ship or his barracks, and he leaves without a pass, is he not liable to imprisonment? I think we are really losing our sense of proportion when we say that to allow a Chinaman the opportunity of obtaining highly-paid employment which he cannot obtain at home, and under conditions, as I have said, where every care will be taken of his interest—it is going rather far to say that that approaches slavery, or is demoralising in any way. I do not think the noble Earl has quite realised the fact that the whole organisation of Government, society, and railways has been based on the expectation of the expanding industry of the Transvaal. It is true that in 1898, before the war, they were raising gold at the rate of £20,000,000 a year, and that now the rate is £14,000,000 a year. It is also true that the expenditure, which, in 1898, was only £4,000,000, is now over £6,000,000 a year, and the debt of the Transvaal in the same period, if you take into consideration £6,000,000 wanted for municipal loans at Johannesburg, and the £30,000,000 pledged to this country, has risen from £14,000,000 to £71,000,000. How is the interest on that debt to be paid? There is already a very heavy deficit in the Transvaal.

If the Imperial Parliament stands in the way of the industrial development of the Transvaal, I should like to know whether those who support such a policy are prepared to incur the obligation which will devolve upon us if the Transvaal cannot pay the interest on the debt? I entirely agreed with the noble and learned Lord when he said that the ultimate fate of South Africa would depend upon the present action of the Imperial Parliament. I approach this question from the standpoint of one who believes that every consideration except that of honour should be subordinated to the adoption of a policy which will bring about an increase in the number of British settlers in the Transvaal. I believe it to be true that by means of the temporary employment of Asiatics we will secure highly profitable employment for a large number of British artisans for whom no employment can be found at present. We will also secure increased trade, and a large increase of employment at home. It is because I believe this that I so strongly urge on the House the importance of helping the Transvaal to settle its own difficulties in the way it thinks best. The noble and learned Lord, in his modesty, thinks that he alone must be right and that Lord Milner and everyone else in the Transvaal who is in favour of the temporary employment of Asiatics must be wrong. Reference has been made to the two gentlemen who signed the Minority Report of the Labour Commission, and especially to one of them, Mr. Whiteside. I would point out that out of nineteen gentlemen nominated by Lord Milner Mr. Whiteside was the only one who was rejected at Johannesburg at a popular election. Does not that convince the noble and learned Lord that there has not been the crafty and unholy conspiracy to get cheap labour to which he referred.

LORD COLERIDGE: I did not use the word "craft" in that connection. I used it in connection with Lord Milner's accusations against those who differed from him in politics.

EARL GREY: I pass from that. The noble and learned Lord said there had been an absence of recruiting activity. He has made a diligent examination of the voluminous Blue-books and has picked out every point which tells against the British representatives in South Africa. He has not mentioned the fact, which is stated in the Blue-book, that since 1901 the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association has spent £445,000 in endeavouring to obtain labour. Does not that large expenditure prove that they were in earnest? I say that the expenditure of that sum in an organised attempt to ransack the whole continent of Africa to obtain coloured unskilled labour shows that they have done their utmost to meet the demand at the mines. Some 68,000 natives were employed by the members of this association on the last day of last year, and they want 172,000 to-day in order to bring the mines into full working order. The natives are receiving 54s. a month and getting better food than they ever obtained outside Johannesburg in their own kraals. The noble and learned Lord made a point of the fact that no compensation was given for injury, but he will see in the Blue-book that Sir George Farrar definitely states that the natives do receive compensation on the same lines as working men in Great Britain, and that the compensation goes to their relatives in the event of death.

I will compare the case of the Kaffir labourer with that of the English labourer. The Kaffir labourer receives from 54s. to 60s. a month with food and lodging. If he chooses to put in two years employment, at the end of that period, even allowing himself during the two years £20 for extra luxuries to improve the dietary, he can return home with between £50 and £60 in his pocket. What does he do with that? I have been in the country and I speak of what I know. He buys four or five wives, and these wives work for him. He can sit in idleness for the rest of his life getting fat on the money he receives from the grain grown for him by his wives. Is there any British workman who has got an opportunity of obtaining such great advantages in return for two years work? The Kaffir is practically a millionaire for the rest of his life, with nothing to do and five wives to wait upon him. The noble and learned Lord appealed, in a tragic voice, to His Majesty's Government not to extend the operation of this Act to Rhodesia. Parliament has the right, if it wishes, to ruin the Transvaal—as it will do if it does not allow the people in the Colony to do as they wish in the matter of the importation of labour—but what right has it to interfere with Rhodesia, towards which the British taxpayers have not paid a penny? Rhodesia has been obtained for the British Empire by the enterprise of private individuals, and has contributed certainly over £1,000,000 in stamp and transfer fees to the National Exchequer. Why should Parliament say that Rhodesia must not have the help of Chinese labour? Chinese labour may be just as necessary for the Rhodesian mines as it is for the Transvaal, and, if it is, Rhodesia ought to have it. Rhodesia depends for its prosperity on the mining industry just in the same way as the Transvaal does. I therefore hope that Rhodesia will be treated in the same way as the Transvaal, and that the importation of labour will be allowed as it is required. The action of the Imperial Parliament is being watched with great anxiety in South Africa; and the leaders of the Opposition are simply playing the game of the disloyal faction throughout South Africa by trying to prevent a step which is absolutely necessary for a rapid increase in the number of settlers.

Moved, "That the debate stand adjourned until Monday next."—(*The Lord Bishop of Hereford.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

BISHOPRIC OF BRISTOL BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

House adjourned at a quarter before Eight o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 18*th March*, 1904.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (PETITION FOR ADDITIONAL PROVISION) (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for additional Provision in the following Bill, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz.:—London County Council (General Powers) Bill. Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

Felixstowe Gas Bill; Gomersal Gas Bill; Kettering Improvement Bill; Norwich Water Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP No. 1).

Mr. Kimber reported from the Committee on Group No. 1 of Railway Bills, That the parties promoting the Humber Commercial Railway and Dock Bill had stated that the evidence of Captain John Whitley Dixon, R.N., Humber Conservancy Office, Hull, was essential to their case; and, it having been proved that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said Captain John Whitley Dixon, R.N., do attend the said Committee upon Monday next, at half-past eleven of the clock.

Ordered, That Captain John Whitley Dixon, R.N., do attend the Committee on Group No. 1 of Railway Bills upon Monday next, at half-past eleven of the clock.

Croydon Gas Bill; Southend-on-Sea Gas Bill; Ryde Gas Bill; Brixham Gas Bill; Great Northern Railway Bill; London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway Bill; Great Central and Midland Joint Railways Bill. Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Birkdale Improvement Bill. Reported from the Police and Sanitary Committee, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Harrow Road and Paddington Tramways Bill. Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Watford and District Tramways (Extension of Time) Bill. Reported [Preamble not proved]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Metropolitan Common Scheme (Farnborough) Provisional Order Bill. Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered upon Monday next.

Metropolitan Common Scheme (Hillingdon East) Provisional Order Bill. Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time upon Monday next.

PETITIONS.

ELECTIONS (HOURS OF CLOSING).

Petition from Bethnal Green, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCES (RENEWAL).

Petitions against alteration of Law; from Altrincham; Bute; Briercliffe; Golborne; Burton Latimer; East Ham; Bleadney; Peckham; Whitby; Bacup; Seedley; Theddingworth; Pontywain; Witney; Eccles; Bridgwater; Glantwrch: Pentredwr; Gurnos; and Llansamlet; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES BILL.

Petition from Sunderland, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF BUTTER BILL.

Petitions against: from Stoke Newington (two); Dover; Guildford; Faversham; Sheerness; and Wolverhampton; to lie upon the Table.

TRANSVAAL (CHINESE LABOUR ORDINANCE).

Petition from Theddingworth, for withdrawal; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COLLEGE CHARTER ACT, 1871 (YORKSHIRE COLLEGE, LEEDS).

Paper [presented 17th March] to be printed. [No. 104.]

TRANSVAAL.

Copy presented, of further correspondence relating to the Transvaal

Labour Question [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

MARRIAGES, BIRTHS, AND DEATHS (ENGLAND).

Copy presented, of General Abstract of Marriages, Births, and Deaths registered in England and Wales in the year 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX).

Copy presented, of Order made by the County Council of the County of Middlesex, altering certain Polling Districts in the Harrow Parliamentary Division [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

METROPOLITAN CATTLE MARKET.

Accounts presented, for the year 1903, with an account of extraordinary works executed other than the general repairs for the same period [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.

Copy presented, of Returns of accidents and casualties as reported to the Board of Trade by the several Railway Companies in the United Kingdom during the year ended 31st December, 1903, together with Reports of the Inspecting Officers of the Railway Department to the Board of Trade upon certain accidents which were inquired into [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PAPER LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

Land Transfer Rules. Copy of Rules made in pursuance of The Land Transfer Act, 1875, dated 18th December, 1903 [by Act].

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Improvements of House of Commons—Expenditure.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): To ask the hon. Member for Chorley, as representing the First Commissioner of Works, what sums were voted and spent respectively on works of sanitation or improvement in the House of Commons, its precincts, and Committee Rooms during the financial years 1901–2, 1902–3, and 1903–4, and what amounts of such sums have been attributable to recommendations of any Committee of the House.

(*Answered by Lord Balcarres.*) The amounts are as follows:—

	Voted. £	Expended. £
1901–2 . .	250	1,333
1902–3 . .	6,400	4,057
1903–4 . .	850	830

In the case of the last mentioned year the amount of expenditure can only be given approximately. The expenditure of £1,120 in 1901–2 and £3,445 in 1902–3 may be attributed to the recommendations of the House of Commons Accommodation Committee of 1901, and the sum of about £600 to the Committee of 1902 and 1903.

Suez Canal Convention.

MR. MOON (St. Pancras, N.): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs when the last annual meeting took place of the Agents in Egypt of the Powers signatory of the Suez Canal Convention of 1888, as prescribed by Article 8 of that Convention for the purpose of taking note of the due execution of its provisions, one of which (Article 4) limits the stay of the ships of war of belligerents at Port Said and the roadstead of Suez to twenty-four hours, except in case of distress; and whether he can state when the next meeting will take place.

(*Answered by Earl Percy.*) No such meetings have been held.

Tradesmen—Cash-on-Delivery Postal System.

SIR JOHN ROLLESTON (Leicester): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that the cash-on-delivery system is declared to be opposed to the wishes and interests of a large class of retail traders as expressed by resolutions of trade associations; and whether, before proceeding further, he will submit the matter to discussion in the House of Commons.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) I regret that I am not in a position at present to add anything to the Answer which I gave on the 15th instant to the Question asked by the hon. Member on that date respecting the introduction of a system of cash-on-delivery.†

Sale of Poisons.

Sir THOMAS DEWAR (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, having regard to the fact that attention has been called by the Coroner for the City of London, and other officers holding similar positions, to deaths through misadventure arising from the sale of poisons in unlabelled vessels, will he consider the expediency of adding poisons such as phosphorous, cocaine, and chlorodynes to the Schedule of the Pharmacy Act, 1868, and arranging for the prohibition of the sale of corrosive mineral acids and ammonia unless in vessels bearing the word poison; and will the sale of poisonous preparations to young children be prohibited.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas.*) It does not rest with me to take any such measures as are suggested; but I may refer my hon. friend to the Answer given yesterday by the First Lord of the Treasury‡ to the effect that a Bill to amend the Pharmacy Acts will be introduced in another place after Easter.

Grants for Secondary Schools.

Mr. MORRELL (Oxfordshire, Woodstock): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education if he will state at what date the Board contemplate being able to initiate the revised scheme which was intended to take the place of the grants in aid of scholarships payable under chapter 2, ss. 66–70, of the regulations for secondary schools [Cd. 1668, 1903].

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) Information has been circulated, and sent to the public Press, that the grants set forth in the chapter referred to will be continued for the present, the note at the head of the chapter having been withdrawn. I am not in a position to state when a revised scheme is likely to be issued; but I am of opinion that nothing can be done in this direction during the coming financial year.

Education of Children in Assam.

Sir MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE (Bethnal Green, N.E.): To ask the Secretary of State for India if he is aware that there is little or no adequate provision for the primary education of the children of the labourers on the tea gardens of Assam, and if he will consider the advisability of urging the Government of that province to cause proper facilities to be provided at an early date for the vernacular education of the children employed, or resident, upon such plantations in Assam.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) I will transmit my hon. friend's suggestion for the consideration of the Government of India, but he is probably aware that the labouring classes from which the coolies in Assam are drawn do not avail themselves as freely as could be wished of the facilities for education offered by Government.

Re-Arming of Artillery.

Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will say how long will be taken in the re-armament of the Horse and Field Artillery, and how much longer in the completion of the authorised reserve of guns; and at what date it is expected that the re-armament and supply will be concluded.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster.*) If the right hon. Baronet will kindly refer to page 4 of the Memorandum on Army Estimates, 1904–5, he will find under the heading, "New Patterns of Artillery and Rifles," the following statement: "It will not be possible to secure delivery during 1904–5 of more than the number of complete batteries assigned to India; but manufacture will be in full swing in the latter part of the year, and rapid deliveries of batteries for the Home Army will take place throughout the following year. Arrangements are being made to complete practically the whole re-armament, together with a large number of reserve batteries, by the 31st March, 1907." No further details are at present available.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxxi., 1123.

‡ See (4) *Debates*, cxxxi., 1380.

ARRANGEMENT FOR DEBATE ON VOTE OF CENSURE.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs) said that as the Prime Minister was not present perhaps the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Wellington Division would answer a Question he desired to put. It had reference to the proceedings on Monday. He understood that a private Bill had been put down which might occupy a long time and he wished to know what course the Government intended to take regarding it.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY (Sir A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somersetshire, Wellington) said that any alteration in the arrangement was a matter for negotiation between the promoters and opponents of the Bill and the Chairman of Ways and Means. A statement would, however, be made on the Motion for the Adjournment that evening.

RAILWAYS (PRIVATE SIDINGS) BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order for Second Reading read.

SIR JOHN BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I beg to move.

*SIR WILLIAM TOMLINSON (Preston) said he desired to second the Motion. The occasion for the introduction of the Bill had arisen from certain decisions in the Court of Appeal in Scotland and England from judgments of the Railway Commissioners. The custom of constructing private sidings *i.e.*, sidings on land belonging to private persons and connected with the railways was almost as old as the institution of railways themselves. In 1845, by Section 76 of the Railway Clauses Act, owners and occupiers of land had conferred upon them the right, subject to certain conditions, to connect such land with railways for their own use. That clause had been incorporated in every private Railway Act which had been passed since, and until the decisions of the Court of Appeal in the two cases to which he had referred, it was universally believed that private owners had under that clause certain definite rights. The rights supposed to be conferred by that section had often been the subject of litigation before the Railway Commissioners, and they had always been accepted by the railway companies as binding upon them. The decisions given were really carrying out Section 9 of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act of 1888, in which the rights of owners of private sidings were specially recognised, and also Section 4 of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act of 1894, whereby not only the existing sidings were recognised but express permission was given to the Railway Commissioners to settle disputes as to the amount of rebate which was due to private owners for services rendered by them at the siding. In 1901 there was a case in Scotland in reference to a siding belonging to Messrs. Cowan & Son, Limited, who took proceedings against the North British Railway Company. There, amongst other things, the question of reasonable facilities to provide sidings was raised, and the Commissioners held that the firm should have reasonable facilities to have their trucks delivered at, or taken from, their sidings by the railway company. On this the railway company appealed to the Court of Appeal in Scotland and the decision of the Railway Commissioners was reversed. He need not go into the particulars of the case, because another followed in England more directly to the point. He referred to the case of the Lancashire Brick and Tile Company and the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company. In 1901 that company connected its land with the railway, under Section 76 of the Act of 1845, and the Railway Commissioners allowed them the right. The Court of Appeal, however, reversed the decision, holding that Section 76 never had the meaning which the Legislature, the Board of Trade, the railway companies and private owners conceived it to possess, and that the owners of private sidings, who had spent in many cases thousands of pounds in laying out and connecting their sidings with the railway, were entirely at the mercy of the railway companies. It might be asked, perhaps, why those interested in private sidings did not in these cases go to the final Court of Appeal, the House of Lords, but they were precluded from doing so by the Act of 1898. The only case in which an appeal from the Court of Appeal was allowed was where the decision of the Court of Appeal in one portion of the United Kingdom differed from the decision of the Court of Appeal in another part of the United Kingdom. In that case only was an appeal to the House of Lords open.

The existing state of things had created an intolerable situation, and it was felt to be a matter which required redress at an early date. Steps were taken on behalf of private siding owners last session to bring in a Bill, and a measure was brought in which it was hoped and believed would have replaced siding owners in the position in which they were always believed to be before the recent decisions. Unfortunately the Bill was not favourably placed for a Second Reading. Those who understood the position of private siding owners felt that any opportunity for redressing this grievance ought to be used and the promoters of the Bill desired, in framing it, to follow lines approved by the Board of Trade. It was with some regret that they found that the Department did not see their way to go as far as they wanted. The promoters desired that the validity of Clause 76 should be expressly established by Act of Parliament. They did not regard the clause as proposed by the Board of Trade as a sufficient remedy for the grievances of siding owners, but the clause recognised their claims to some extent, and he supported the Second Reading of the Bill as drafted in accordance with the limits insisted on by the Board of Trade, and hoped that the House would accept it. The principal clause in the Bill was a very short one. It went back to the Railway Traffic Act of 1854, and that Act, like the Act of 1888, was based on the recognition of the rights of private siding owners as understood by this House and the Courts of Law at that time. The Bill would not grant all that private siding owners wanted, but would give a substantial proportion of what was desired. Clause 2 of the Act of 1854 was intended to enable the rights of the public generally to be more clearly defined that they previously had been. It defined what reasonable facilities were, and provided that no railway company should make or give any undue or unreasonable preference or advantage to, or in favour of, any particular person or company or to any particular description of traffic in any respect whatsoever. The Bill before the House followed up that provision. He did not see why questions affecting railways should be treated as if they involved any antagonism of interest between the companies and the public. Surely it was to the advantage of the companies to encourage British trade rather than to be merely the carriers of foreign goods imported into this country. It would not be difficult to show that the antagonistic attitude of the railway companies had been one of the inducing causes of British capital being employed abroad rather than at home. It was doubly to the interest of the railway companies to induce British producers to carry on their industries in this country, because they were customers for ever, and therefore he regretted the tone frequently adopted by railway companies, which gave the impression to the producers that they were of no greater interest to the railway companies than foreign producers He had in his hand a list of fifty cases where the railway companies had refused since the recent decisions of the Courts of Appeal to grant facilities to private siding owners except on most onerous terms. As, however, he understood it was not the intention to oppose the Second Reading of this Bill, it was unnecessary to labour the matter. He begged to second the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said the only difference between the railway companies and the traders in this matter was that the traders appeared to think they were the only class of people who used the railways, but there were other classes, and the desire of the railways was to assimilate their traffic to suit all classes, and thus avoid friction. The railway companies did not desire to gain anything by the recent decisions of the Court of Appeal, and were prepared to go back to the provisions of the Railway Clauses Act of 1845. All they asked was that the privileges given to them under that Act should be retained by them. There might require to be some modifications in the Bill when it reached the Committee, and there would have to be a clear definition of the word "reasonable" in Clause 2, in order to avoid litigation in the future. With that understanding he accepted the Second Reading.

Sir JAMES JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street) said that this question of sidings had always been a grievance in the eyes of traders, and he was glad it was now going to be put upon a proper footing. He agreed that there ought to be proper safeguards put in in the interests of the public, and in this matter he spoke with the advantage of experience, because at a particular place in the North he was desirous of having a siding, and found out afterwards that objection was raised, and very sensibly raised, by the Board of Trade, who wished to safeguard against accidents arising from the creation of sidings at busy junctions where collisions might result. He submitted that the railway companies were just as anxious to give facilities to the public, and to increase their profits, as other people were; and he anticipated that they might probably hear from the President of the Board of Trade whether the measure had the sanction of his Department.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Gerald Balfour, Leeds, Central) said the object of the Bill was to restore what was always believed to be the law until two or three years ago. He was glad to find the Bill found favour with the railway companies, and all he had to say was that the Board of Trade were prepared to consider with a fair, open, and impartial mind, any Amendments which it might be thought desirable to move.

Mr. CRIPPS (Lancashire, Stretford) expressed himself as being in favour of the Second Reading. It was clearly in the interest of the railway companies and the traders that where facilities of this kind could be given, subject to the general convenience of the working of the railway and satisfactory to the public, that they should be given, and the companies, he thought, would not oppose them save where such facilities would, in their opinion, be dangerous to the travelling public. He thought the Bill ought to receive the assent of the House. It would do away with the technical difficulties of the case, and each case could be referred to the Railway Commission to be dealt with on its merits.

Mr. COHEN (Islington, E.) said he had no difficulty in accepting the view of the railway companies as expressed by the hon. Member for Peckham in this matter. He was glad that for the first time this Bill had met with the cordial assent of the railway companies, but, when the hon. Member stated that the companies had always been in favour of benefiting the interest of the traders, he could only say that had they been as much opposed as it was stated they were in favour they could not have adopted a stronger attitude. The impression created in his mind had always been that the railway companies were unfavourably disposed to granting facilities. He agreed that the word "reasonable" ought to be defined as in an Act of Parliament its meaning was much too vague, and he hoped when the Bill got into Committee a proper definition would be found. He trusted that the Bill would be unanimously read a second time, and that in due course it would become statute law.

Mr. REGINALD LUCAS (Portsmouth) declared that traders in many parts of the country were subjected to great disadvantage in this matter and he, therefore, gave the Bill his support with the greatest satisfaction.

Mr. ALEXANDER CROSS (Glasgow, Camlachie) also supported the Bill and was glad that the House of Commons was attempting to deal practically with a situation of difficulty that had been created by technical legal decisions. He looked on the Bill as a vindication of the practical good sense of that Assembly. He traced a change in the attitude of the railway companies towards this Bill. It was all very well for them to claim that the interests of the trader and of the company were identical: the interests were too much like those of master and servant, and it was a well-known fact that those who were the first to get sidings were often placed in a far more advantageous positi n in regard to terms than those who applied later. He would, however, urge the desirability that the words of the Bill should be made as broad as possible. No trader would desire to have a siding in a position dangerous to passenger traffic, and the experts of the Board of Trade would be well able to decide what were reasonable facilities.

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.

HALL MARKING OF FOREIGN PLATE BILL.

[Second Reading.]

Order for Second Reading read.

*__Mr. SAMUEL ROBERTS__ (Sheffield, Ecclesall), in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, said it dealt with the question of the hall marking of foreign plate imported into this country. He introduced a similar Bill last year and then had the support of the Board of Trade. Last year a large deputation waited upon the President of that Deparment and presented to him a petition signed by those interested in the question at Sheffield, Birmingham, and London. The signatories to the petition included the London Wholesale Jewellers Allied Trades Association, the National Association of Goldsmiths, the Birmingham Jewellers and Goldsmiths Association, the Sheffield Master Silver Smiths Association, the Workmen's Association connected with the trade, and the Sheffield Federated Trades Council. He might also tell the House that the Associated Chambers of Commerce had unanimously passed a resolution in favour of the principle of the Bill. It was, in fact, a measure which both masters and men were united in pressing on the Legislature, and in the preparation of which he was indebted for assistance to the President of the Board of Trade. It had indeed been drafted under the superintendence of the right hon. Gentleman, who he believed would speak in favour of it that day. He would first explain to the House how the law at present stood with regard to the hall marking of plate in this country, both for goods manufactured here and for those imported. It was evident that for the protection of the public gold and silver plate must be tested in some way to ensure the quality of the metal. For that reason assay offices had been established in various places. No gold or silver plate could be put on the market without being first sent to an assay office and tested and marked accordingly. Hon. Members would agree that that was a reasonable provision. Not only must goods made in this country be so tested, but foreign plate also had to be dealt with in the same way, and to have impressed upon it the same marks. The marks which were now required to be put on plate made in this country were for silver wares, first, the local mark of the Assay Office, as in London a leopard's head, in Birmingham an anchor, in Sheffield a crown, and so on; secondly, a lion, indicating silver; thirdly, a letter varying with every year to indicate in what year and what century the plate was assayed. These were the three standard marks which all silver plate sent into the Assay Offices had to bear. These marks were likewise put on foreign plate, but in addition to them it was provided by the Customs (Tariff) Act of 1876 that foreign plate should be marked with a letter F on another escutcheon. It was not often that Acts of Parliament indicated reasons for their existence or provisions, but in this case it was noteworthy that the Act stated that this was to be done in order "to denote that the plate was imported from abroad." The object thus indicated in the statute had not been secured, because the letter F had not been recognised as an indication of foreign origin. He might explain to the House that in addition to the ordinary hall, marks it was usual for the manufacturer's initials indicating his name, to be added, and not unnaturally this letter F had been mistaken for the initial of the manufacturer. The public on seeing the lion mark were satisfied that the goods were silver and did not look at anything else. Foreigners were now bringing their plate into this country for the purpose of getting the lion stamped on it, and so securing by aid of the British hall mark a better price for their manufactures in their own and in neutral markets. That was the grievance of which British manufacturers complained.

The grievance was that the foreigner sent his goods into this country for the purpose of getting the English hall mark and then sold them at an enhanced price. That was a practice against which the Legislature intended to guard in 1876, and the object of the present Bill was to enable that intention to be carried out. A precedent existed for what was now sought. By the Merchandise Marks Act of 1887 an exception as to marking was made with regard to watch-cases. Foreign watch-cases had been sent into this country in large quantities for the purpose of getting the hall mark, and were then sold as British. The Committee which inquired into the subject came to the conclusion that—

> "it was clearly proved that while the hall mark was intended as a mere mark of standard quality yet it had become an indication of British origin, and that when it appeared on foreign watch-cases it was taken to attribute British origin to the whole of the watch."

Consequently. watches were given a different mark altogether, and the letter "F" did not appear. It was now alleged that the grievance which existed in 1887 with regard to watches had been proved with regard to all kinds of plate, and a special mark was asked for. The Bill provided that foreign plate should be assayed in exactly the same way as at present, but that, instead of having the present hall marks with the letter "F," it should have some mark readily distinguishable from those used for marking plate wrought or made in the United Kingdom, "as His Majesty may determine by Order in Council." The particular mark to be applied would be decided by the Privy Council, who would doubtless consult the different Assay Offices. It was believed that when that Order had been made the grievance would be remedied. He had shown that there was a demand for this Bill on the part of the wholesale and retail traders. that by the Customs Tariff Act of 1876 the Legislature meant to make a difference between the marks on foreign and those on British plate, and that the object of the Legislature had not been attained. The Bill created no new principle, inasmuch as it followed the precedent of the Merchandise Marks Act of 1887, and it involved no fiscal protection of any kind. British manufacturers did not object to any fair competition, but they did object to foreign goods being sold as British-made, and he hoped the House would agree to the Second Reading of the Bill. He begged to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) said that when this Bill was before the House last session he felt that it was not one that could be allowed to pass without full discussion. It was true that the hall mark was the same both for British and for foreign plate, with the addition in the latter case of the letter "F," that letter being added for the express purpose of denoting that the plate was made abroad. The object of the hall mark was to guarantee that the material of the article was of standard quality, and that held good whether the letter "F" appeared or not. The indication of the place of origin was another question altogether. The Bill proposed the adoption of a different mark to distinguish foreign-made goods, and that was exactly the object of the Merchandise Marks Act. Why was it not proposed to place on the articles "Made in Germany" or "Made in Italy" as the case might be? That would be very useful as it would enable people to know where the designs came from. Everybody knew that the Merchandise Marks Act had ruined the trade of this country.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) Then why does the hon. Member always oppose a Bill to amend it?

MR. CALDWELL said he opposed it because the amendment was as silly as the Act it sought to amend. That act had simply advertised Germany and her trade, and the Germans had been competing with us ever since. The Act of 1887 had seriously injured this country, and the present Bill would not do any good. When people were attracted by a design which had been made abroad, they would find out where it was made and buy it there instead of in the British market. He had refused to allow this Bill to pass after midnight without discussion, and he was glad it had come up now so that he could give his reasons for taking that step.

MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said the speech of the hon. Member for Mid Lanarkshire left out two main considerations—firstly, the interests of the working people; and secondly, the consumer. He would consider first the interests of the working classes. What higher interest could the worker have than the interest he had in seeing that the name of his country should not be misused by foreigners? Upon this point he addressed himself particularly to labour Members. This was the one direction in which the working man might be said to have a share in the asset which was contained in the goodwill of the business. The representation that goods were made in Great Britain when they were not was one of the most dangerous ways in which that most valuable part of a working man's property could be attacked. It was idle to contend that this Bill was intended to protect any particular trade, for its object was to protect the consumer, who was being deceived to the prejudice of the wage-earning producer. He thought he had shown that this Bill was drawn upon genuine democratic lines, and its aim was to defeat malpractices, not on the part of the producers, but on the part of the middlemen. It was only drawing a red herring across the path for the hon. Member for Mid Lanarkshire to introduce the failure of certain proposals in the Merchandise Marks Act, for they were admitted defects, and there were nearly always some defects in every Act of Parliament. The requirement that you should have the place of origin marked upon the goods was put in because of our treaty obligations, and in the expectation that the executive administration of that Act would be wholly different. It was not expected that affirmative indication of foreign origin would be required in more than a very small proportion of cases. In his opinion the Customs Department were wrongly advised, and a Bill to amend the Merchandise Marks Act ought to be passed, and with the passing of such an amending Bill would disappear the only grievance which could be alleged against the Merchandise Marks Act, except by middlemen who wanted to obtain that to which they were not entitled. He hoped hon. Members would not be led astray by all this talk about labour in Germany, with which this Bill had nothing whatever to do. He entreated the House to go back to first principles, and consider in this matter the good of the greatest number, namely, the consumers and buyers of these goods who had been deceived; and the great mass of working men who were interested in the fair fame of this country for genuineness and sincerity in manufactures. He hoped the House would resolve not to allow working men's property to be filched away by the practice of obtaining custom under false pretences.

SIR JAMES JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street) said the speech they had just listened to was a fair sample of the speeches they were constantly hearing upon questions of this kind. The hon. Member for the Hallam Division's main argument was that this measure would benefit working men. He hoped his hon. friend would insist upon a division, because this Bill was only a bit of protection for certain manufacturers in this country. They were told the same thing and the same arguments were used in favour of the Merchandise Marks Act, and he remembered Mr. Mundella making a powerful speech against it.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: He was in favour of it.

MR. STUART WORTLEY: This statement relates to a deceased Member of this House for whom I had great respect, and I must absolutely contradict the statement that he ever made any speech against the Merchandise Marks Act.

SIR JAMES JOICEY: I was certainly under that impression.

MR. STUART WORTLEY: He may have spoken against some extension of the Bill in later years.

SIR JAMES JOICEY said that so far as filching away working men's property and selling goods under the name of Great Britain which were not made here was concerned, he could not see that such a case had been made out in regard to this Bill. Hall marks were well known to the general public in this country, and he did not see why they should change them. As for selling things under a wrong name, the letter "F" showed clearly that the article was not made in Great Britain. He was satisfied that this Bill was simply intended to protect a particular industry, and if possible to prohibit the importation of foreign-made silver articles. He hoped the House of Commons would not sanction this Bill.

*SIR E. DURNING-LAWRENCE (Cornwall, Truro) said the hon. Member for Mid Lanarkshire had stated that it did not matter what marks were upon silver. He disputed that argument, for there was often a question whether it was the real thing or a copy. They might make silver to-day exactly the same as that which was 130 or 140 years old but they could not put the same mark upon it without fraud. If it were a genuine old piece, instead of fetching 3s. or 5s. per ounce it might fetch £50 per ounce. Therefore it was important that the mark of silver should be understood. It was also very desirable that the public should quite clearly understand when they saw the mark whether the article was of English or of foreign manufacture. He did not say that in all cases the foreign article was worse, for he possessed some articles of foreign plate of extreme value, but he did not want to possess foreign plate that pretended to have been made in England. There never was a time like the present when genuine articles possessed such an extraordinary value. A great many wealthy men were desirous of possessing articles which old British families once possessed in times past, and if dealers could only persuade these men that the articles were real and genuine they did not care what price they paid for them. He very strongly supported the passing of this measure. Watches were sent over to this country from abroad by tens of thousands, and formerly the public, looking at the cases of those watches and seeing the British mark of the lion upon, them would naturally assume that the whole of the watch was British. It had therefore been found necessary to put a mark upon watch-cases which could not be mistaken for a British mark. He failed to see any reason why they should not also put a mark on all foreign plate which would indicate plainly that it was not made in England. He failed to see that this Bill was in any way unfair to foreign workers. If people wanted foreign goods by all means let them buy them, but the public ought not to be misled by a lion being placed upon foreign goods. He was not prepared to say what special marks should be used, but he thought the Board of Trade could settle that. He strongly objected to marks being put on plate which would deceive the ordinary public. He did not think anyone realised the enormous extent to which at the present time cheap silver goods were being made. The price of silver used to be 5s. an ounce, and at that time there used to be a duty upon it of 1s. 6d. per ounce. To-day the price of silver was about 2s. 2½d. an ounce. He was told recently by a wholesale manufacturer that his firm had started works for the manufacture of small silver articles which could be sold at 3s. an ounce, but great complaints were made that purchasers were not able to distinguish between British and foreign-made articles. He asked hon. Members opposite not to oppose the Bill.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.) said that when he saw the names on the back of the Bill he had a suspicion that there was something against free trade in connection with it. The hon. Member for the Hallam Division of Sheffield distinctly said that he supported the measure because the free-trade doctrine was old fashioned.

MR. STUART WORTLEY: I said nothing of the kind.

MR. SCHWANN: I am in the recollection of the House.

MR. STUART WORTLEY: I must ask the hon. Gentleman to quote my exact words.

MR. SCHWANN: I had no satirical motive in making the statement. I understood that was one of the chief reasons why the hon. Member supported the Bill.

MR. STUART WORTLEY: I would ask whether, if it is not a law, it is not the unbroken custom of this House for one Member to accept from another the explanation of what he has said.

MR. SCHWANN said he accepted the statement from the hon. Member, and was glad to hear that he was a free-trader. He thought it would only add to the difficulty of the buyer if there were put on the goods a certain trade mark which would require much greater knowledge of hall marking on the part of the outsider before he could comprehend what the mark meant. What had taken place under the Merchandise Marks Act of 1887 ought to be a warning to those who were in favour of British trade. He could state from long experience as a merchant in Manchester that until that Act was passed an immense amount of goods made in foreign countries were ordered through England. The profits upon those transactions spread throughout Manchester and other places. Those profits were now lost to this country, and the worst of it was that not only was the shipping of foreign goods by English merchants prevented, but an immense number of orders had been lost which otherwise would have come to English firms.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: The hon. Member knows that that was not borne out by the evidence before the Commission.

MR. SCHWANN: I am giving my own experience.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: The hon. Member did not give evidence.

MR. SCHWANN said he could assure the House that that was a fact. A number of foreign-made articles used to be ordered through Manchester houses in conjunction with English goods, but when buyers found that they were made abroad they followed up the manufacturers and gave them the orders. The result was that all sorts of new fabrics were introduced into those countries—fabrics of which it was not perhaps very easy to send out samples from England. The effect was that an immense amount of trade which was formerly done in this country had gone to the manufacturers in other countries. His hon. friend had said that it was ruining British industry. He did not believe that for a moment. He hoped the House would pause before it passed this Bill It seemed to be a measure in the interest of some manufacturers, and no doubt the working people of Sheffield and Birmingham, but it was not in the interest of the public generally. He should regret, even for those trades concerned, if we were to abandon the free-trade principles upon which we had acted in England for the last fifty or sixty years. The effect of the measure would be indirectly to put considerable difficulty in the way of importing foreign plate with the result that actually less plate would be introduced into this country. One great advantage which our own manufacturers derived from these imports was that they were able to see the beautiful designs produced in France and other countries not second to this country in the matter of taste. If we once commenced to rope in a trade, to confine it within bars, and to protect it, the imagination of manufacturers would diminish. They would not see the necessity for employing first-class workmen, and would think that anything would do for this country, because the public would be compelled to buy the goods. He would support his hon. friend in pressing this matter to a division.

*Mr. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby) said reference had been made to the Merchandise Marks Act and its effect on the foreign trade of this country. He wished to inform the House that he had received a request from the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce to support this Bill. When they heard so much of the injury done by the Merchandise Marks Act in certain quarters, he could not help thinking that this important body would not have asked him to support the Bill if they thought there was anything in that objection. It was only proposed by this Bill to follow on the lines of the previous Act, and therefore they were not entering upon any new departure. By passing this Bill Parliament would enable the public to know what they ought to know, namely, from where the goods were imported. He believed that a well-designed article would sooner or later obtain the appreciation of the public. He felt convinced, however, that foreign goods should be marked in the way proposed. By passing the Bill they would only be doing justice to British workmen, while not preventing the entrance into this country of really good foreign goods.

Mr. HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle) said all the speeches to which he had listened from the other side of the House were more or less of a protectionist character. The hon. Member for the Hallam Division put in a strong appeal to the labour representatives to support the Bill, and assured them that its promotors were actuated by a desire to do something in the interest of the particular trades affected. He had heard no argument which at all went to prove that the workers as a whole were going to be benefited if this Bill were passed. There was no evidence that the articles were made under unfair conditions, although they were often told that such was the case in connection with foreign-made goods. Nor had the question of inferior quality been raised. That had been settled by previous legislation. If no attempt had been made to prove that the articles imported were of inferior quality what could be the object of the measure? To his mind the object was to promote not the interest of the workers but that of the manufacturers. Several speakers had said that under present conditions the purchaser did not know that an article was of foreign manufacture. That seemed to him to be a reflection on the intelligence of the purchaser. Surely all the purchasers did not go into the question whether the firm's name began with an "F," or whether "F" represented that the article had been made abroad. He supposed that the hon. Gentleman wanted two "F's" to represent that the article had been made abroad. How far was this principle going to be carried. It might be driven much further than the hon. Gentleman desired. Some hon. Members who represented labour might demand that there should be some mark to distinguish articles which were made under unfair or sweating conditions in this country; and then it would be found that those who were asking for support for this Bill would go into the Lobby against them. He spoke in the House directly in the interest of labour, and he would oppose this measure, believing that it was not in the interest of the workmen but that it was of a protectionist character, and instead of helping the workmen it would have the opposite effect.

*Mr. LOWE (Birmingham, Edgbaston) said that the Bill was simple and reasonable. There were a large number of people engaged in this trade in his constituency who were unanimously in favour of the Bill and who had asked him to give it his support; and he intended to do so. It was quite erroneous to suppose that the Bill raised the question as between free trade and protection. It was not intended to restrict the sale of these articles, but that people should see that they were purchasing foreign-made articles. The principle had been recognised in the Act of 1876, which provided that goods should be marked in a distinctive way showing that they had been made abroad, and that they should be marked by the letter "F." But they had heard from the hon. Member who had introduced this Bill that it had been found, from experience, that that mark was not sufficient; and all he asked was that the mark should be made sufficiently distinctive. That seemed to him to be eminently fair and reasonable, and he would give the Bill his warmest support.

*SIR JOSEPH LEESE (Lancashire, Accrington) said that his objection to the Bill was that it was unnecessary. Why should they load the Statute-book with unnecessary measures? The Act of 1876 provided very clearly and distinctly that full notice should be given to the consumer or purchaser that what he wanted to buy was not made in this country but abroad. Under that Act the letter "F" in an escutcheon was required to be stamped on the article alongside the marks indicating the quality of the metal. By Statute that letter "F" was declared to mean foreign make. If that notice to the buyer was insufficient what kind of mark would be substituted? He could not see how either workpeople or manufacturers would be benefited by this Bill. In nine cases out of ten the buyer would purchase what most took his fancy whether foreign or British. Under these circum- he objected to the Bill as wholly unnecessary.

*SIR FRANCIS POWELL (Wigan) said that if he thought this Bill was a protectionist proposal he would vote against it, because he entirely concurred with the First Lord of the Treasury in his objection to a protectionist policy. But this Bill was not of that character. The only intention of the measure was that the purchaser should have the right to know what was the character of the article he was purchasing. There were some goods, such as silks, which were better produced in, say, France than in this country, and always would be, because of the delicate artistic faculty of the French workman, which had not been given to the English workman. Some reference had been made to the Merchandise Marks Act in connection with the discussions in Committee on the Musical Copyright Bill. He believed that that Act had worked in restraint of trade; although the representations made that day by the representative of the shipping houses in Liverpool that it had not so acted, had made an impression on his mind.

*MR. BULL (Hammersmith) said he understood that the object of this Bill was to have a separate mark for foreign-made goods. He was connected with a firm which had manufactured gold and silver articles for a century. They had encouraged native artists and had a large collection of models; and they found that these models were copied abroad and the manufactured articles were brought into this country and were purchased here under the idea that they came from his firm. He hoped that the Board of Trade would alter the whole of the marking of these goods, and would make the marking entirely distinct so as to show which was home and which was foreign-made. What was wanted was that in the case of foreign plate the old heraldic marks of the lion, crown, anchor, etc., should not appear at all, but something entirely distinct.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT said that this was in no sense a measure connected with protection. All the bodies connected with the manufacture of gold and silver urged the adoption of the Bill. The hon. Member opposite said he represented labour in a special sense. He denied that. He himself represented labour. The great majority of his constituents were working men. The hon. Member for Barnard Castle did not represent labour any more than any other hon. Member in the House. He contended that the interests of the working men were injuriously affected by the present state of affairs. The hon. Member for the Barnard Castle Division said that he understood perfectly well the marks on these foreign-made goods. Might he ask the hon. Member to look at his watch and see whether it was of English make or of foreign make? He very much doubted whether he would be able to do it. He remembered when the Merchandise Marks Bill was being considered in Committee, the late Mr. Mundella was in the Chair, and when the members of the Committee were asked to produce their watches it was found that the only member who had an English-made watch was Mr. Mundella himself, although several of the members had watches which bore the names of English firms on them. The hon. Member for Durham maligned the late Mr. Mundella in connection with the Merchandise Marks Act. Mr. Mundella took a very active part indeed in the enactment of the Act of 1887. He was also a member of the Committee of 1896 and 1897, but unfortunately his death occurred just before the Committee reported, so that he was not at the final sitting. The Committee reported that they were "satisfied that the operation of the Merchandise Marks Act of 1887 has been on the whole beneficial. There has been abundant evidence that it has, to a great extent, stopped the fraudulent practices against which it was directed." On behalf of the watchmaking trade it was represented that the marks of foreign origin placed upon watch-cases should be in visible letters, inasmuch as it was found that the watches were made abroad and imported in order to be placed in British hall-marked cases and then sold as British manufacture. The Committee thought the demand reasonable. The Member for Mid Lanark was very emphatic in his condemnation of the Merchandise Marks Act, and he was very glad to hear him say that the words "Made in Germany" had done an immense amount of injury to the trade of this country. If so, why did he continually oppose this Bill, and not alter the words and put in something more definite?

Mr. CALDWELL said his answer was that the proposals of the hon. Members were quite as ridiculous as the present system of marking.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT said why, then, did not the hon. Member suggest some change? It was all very well condemning everything. The hon. Member was a very clever and a very persevering man and opposed everybody's Bills except his own. He invited the hon. Member to confer with him and see in what way they could remove this injury to the trade of the country. It had been shown by his hon. friend most clearly that the word "F" was of a diminutive character and passed totally unobserved by the ordinary purchaser. That meant

that great injury was done to the purchasers of British plate. It was absurd to attempt to distinguish between the interests of the manufacturers and their workmen in this matter. He hoped, therefore, the House would give the Bill a second reading.

Sir THOMAS ESMONDE (Wexford, N.) thought it was a great pity that this subject could not be discussed without the question of free trade and protection being brought into the discussion. However foreign manufactured silver was marked it would make no difference to the quantity that came into this country or the amount of foreign manufactured silver sold. In his opinion this was a question which the House was entitled to consider and discuss from the consumer's point of view. They had different hall marks for England, Ireland, and Scotland, and it was a common custom for English manufacturers to send silver over to Ireland to be marked, and the letter "F" which was put on foreign manufactured silver was not sufficient to tell the ordinary buyer where the silver came from. Hall marks were at first marks of origin, and for his part he would go much further than this Bill went. He did not consider it was fair that either English, Irish, or Scotch marks should be put on any silver of foreign manufacture, and it would be a wise thing for the Board of Trade to come to that conclusion and to prevent any of the British hall marks being put on foreign silver, and if at the same time some other mark were put on to show that that silver had paid a tax it would be a much better arrangement than that which obtained at present. If people wanted to buy Irish, English, or Scotch silver they should be at liberty to purchase it, and none of these marks should be put on silver of foreign origin.

*Mr. MURRAY (Coventry) supported the Second Reading of the Bill. He repudiated the suggestion that the question of free trade was involved by the measure, declaring that the Party that it was supported by, the Members for Birmingham, did not necessarily raise the question of protection. He stood in a different position, for he was a free-trader, and, as a free-trader, declined to associate free trade with fraud. He saw no necessary connection between free trade, which he desired to support, and fraud, which he desired to put an end to. Would it be one of the planks of the platform of the hon. Member for Mid Lanark when, under another Government, he became Secretary for Scotland, or Lord Advocate, to do away with all hall marks.

MR. CALDWELL: I must absolutely decline to make any answer to that, because if the event takes place, which the hon. Gentleman predicts, which is very unlikely, one cannot do anything without consulting one's colleagues.

*MR. MURRAY: The hon. Member had laid down the point that hall marking simply stamped the quality, but it went beyond that; it identified the origin, and the date, which was a very important point in the question of the price of gold and silver. Parliament had gone a step further than the date; it had added the letter "F," to distinguish between foreign and British plate. The supporters of the Bill, who spoke for a very large interest in the country, simply argued that what Parliament did then was in the right direction and was justified, but was not sufficient, and all they asked now was to make that measure more effective. It had been said that the letter "F" might refer to a certain manufacturer, but there could be three different "F's" on different shaped shields, one showing the article was of foreign manufacture, one the nominal mark of the maker, and the third signifying the date; and he did not think the doing away with this confusion could be stigmatised as protection. The Bill, he declared, was brought forward in justifiable defence of interests against fraud, and they ought to be thus protected whether they were those of consumer, manufacturer, or worker. This was not a small matter; it was a matter which interested large sections of trade, and it could not do the slightest harm, for any one who wished would still be able to purchase foreign plate.

MR. NORMAN (Wolverhampton, S.) repudiated in the strongest possible way that any question of protection or free trade was involved by the Bill. If it had savoured of protection, he need not say that his own name would not have appeared in connection with it. The question at issue was a very simple one; it was whether there should be a big "F," or some corresponding mark, to denote that the article was of foreign manufacture. The law had decided that these goods should be marked in a certain fashion, but they were now marked in such a way that the British hall mark, perhaps the highest standard, could be, and was regularly, fraudulently used. This was not only obviously defeating the intentions of the law but also the interests of this country. The issue, therefore, was simply whether the mark was to be used as intended by Parliament or used in such a way as to lend itself to fraud; and he hoped his hon. friends would not vote against the Bill simply because its origin was in the Birmingham constituency.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central) said the Bill was supported by the Board of Trade for reasons stated by the hon. Member for the Ecclesall Division of Sheffield. The question was one of extreme simplicity. The Legislature had already laid down the principle that foreign-made plate should be distinguished from British, and to effect that distinction the Act o f1876 enacted that he letter "F" should be stamped on foreign-made plate sold in this country. It was found, however, that the mark was insufficient, and this Bill proposed in lieu of it a more distinctive mark. The sacred principles of free trade had been invoked against the Bill, and the Merchandise Marks Act had been dragged in and its principle assailed. But was that Act inconsistent with the principles of free trade? If so it would hardly have passed that House without a division in 1887. It might be desirable that the Merchandise Marks Act should be amended in certain directions, but he thought the Select Committee who inquired into its operation were right in maintaining that on the whole its effect had been beneficial. But it was possible to condemn the general effect of the Merchandise Marks Act and yet hold that this Bill was amply justified. The case of this

Bill was a peculiar one, for while the Legislature enacted that a mark should be applied, it had been shown that the mark, which was originally intended to be a guarantee of the quality of the material, had gradually become to be taken as an indication of origin by the great mass of customers. Both customers and producers were entitled to have such a distinctive mark put upon plate that they would be enabled to know what was British-made and what foreign-made. The only consideration which should lead them to leave things as they were was that some particular section of the trade would be seriously damaged by the change. This was not so in the present instance. Every section of the trade, employers and workmen alike, were agreed that the change now proposed would be advantageous, and he hoped the Bill would be read a second time.

COLONEL DENNY (Kilmarnock Burghs) suggested that, in the discussion of the principles of this Bill, the President of the Board of Trade should avoid giving a great and gratuitous advertisement to foreign competitors, as the Merchandise Marks Act had unhappily done. He thought that that Act was one of the greatest disasters to British trade, and had undoubtedly been the origin of other competing lines of steamships from Germany.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 96; Noes, 53. (Division List No. 63.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood Capt. Sir Alex.F.
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Aubrey-Fletcher,Rt. Hn.Sir H.
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hon. G. W. (Leeds
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bignold, Arthur
Black, Alexander William
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Campbell, Rt.Hn.J.A.(Glasgow
Campbell, John (Armagh, S.)
Cavendish, V.C.W. (Derbyshire
Chapman, Edward
Charrington, Spencer
Cripps, Charles Alfred
Crossley, Rt. Hon. Sir Savile
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Denny, Colonel
Dickson, Charles Scott
Donelan, Captain A.
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Fergusson,Rt.Hn.Sir J.(Manc'r
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Flower, Sir Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Fyler, John Arthur
Gardner, Ernest
Garfit, William
Grant, Corrie
Greene, Henry D.(Shrewsbury.
Harris, F. Leverton (Tynem'th)
Helder, Augustus
Hickman, Sir Alfred
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Holland, Sir William Henry
Howard, J. (Midd.,Tottenham)
Jebb, Sir Richard Claverhouse
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (Salop
Knowles, Sir Lees
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Lawrence, Wm. F. (Liverpool
Lawson, Jn. G. (Yorks., N.R.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Francis William
Lucas, ReginaldJ.(Portsmouth
Macdona, John Cumming
Malcolm, Ian
Morrell, George Herbert
Mount, William Arthur
Mowbray, Sir Robert Gray C.
Murnaghan, George
Murray, Charles J. (Coventry)
O Mara, James
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
O'Shee, James John
Parrott, William
Pemberton, John S. G.
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Plummer, Walter R.
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Rasch, Sir Frederic Carne
Reckitt, Harold James
Reid, James (Greenock)
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Spear, John Ward
Stanley, Edw. Jas. (Somerset)
Stewart, Sir Mark J. M'Taggart
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thorburn, Sir Walter
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw. M.
Tuff, Charles
Valentia, Viscount
Vincent,Col.Sir C.E.H.(Sheff'ld
Walker, Col. William Hall
Walrond, Rt.Hn.Sir WilliamH.
Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
Wason, Jn. Cathcart (Orkney)
Whiteley, H.(Ashton und.Lyne
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Wilson, John (Glasgow)
Wodehouse, Rt.Hn. E.R.(Bath
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wrightson, Sir Thomas

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Samuel Roberts and Mr. Norman.

NOES.

Ainsworth, John Stirling
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Burns, John
Cameron, Robert
Causton, Richard Knight
Channing, Francis Allston
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Crean, Eugene
Crombie, John William
Delany, William
Dunn, Sir William
Edwards, Frank
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Fenwick, Charles
Ffrench, Peter
Flynn, James Christopher
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herb. John
Hammond, John
Hayden, John Patrick
Hemphill, Rt. Hon. Charles H.
Horniman, Frederick John

Mr. Gerald Balfour.

Joicey, Sir James
Jones, D. Brynmor (Swansea)
Kitson, Sir James
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cornwall)
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (Accrington)
Levy, Maurice
Lundon, W.
M'Kenna, Reginald
M'Laren, Sir Charles Benjamin
Markham, Arthur Basil
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nolan, Joseph (Louth, South)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.
Priestley, Arthur
Reddy, M.
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Roche, John
Schwann, Charles E.
Slack, John Bamford
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Spencer, Rt.Hn.C.R(Northants
Sullivan, Donal
Thomas, D. Alfred (Merthyr)
Thomson, F. W. (York, W. R.)
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Wallace, Robert
Whiteley, George (York, W.R.)
Whitley, J. H. (Halifax)
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Woodhouse, Sir J.T(Huddersf'd

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Caldwell and Mr. Henderson.

Bill accordingly read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Law, &c.

SAVINGS BANKS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

[SECOND READING].

Order for Second Reading read.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.), in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, said that it was intended to promote the efficiency, economy, and better administration of savings banks, dealing as it did with various points as to which defects had been shown to exist. It was an omnibus Bill of six clauses, which he would briefly explain. Under the Act of 1891 an Inspection Committee was formed and charged with the duty of inspecting the trustee savings banks accounts so as to protect the public against any repetition of those scandals which had, in preceding years, caused so much serious injury to the poor, both in the loss of their savings, and in the consequent discouragement of habits of providence and thrift. The Inspection Committee had found that as a general rule the accounts were well kept; and that the bookkeeping—though in some few cases rather antiquated—was such as to disclose the real position of these banks. Since the appointment of the Committee it had been necessary to report only one or two cases in which the managers had refused to do their duty. The great body of managers had met every reasonable requirement, and had performed their duties assiduously and attentively, thereby securing the safe and sound administration of these banks. The Inspection Committee reported annually to Parliament on the results of their inspection, and the reports of the last few years had pointed out where defects existed, and how reforms might be effected. The Committee consisted of the Chief Accountant of the Bank of England, the President of the Law Society, the Deputy-Registrar of Friendly Societies, and representatives of the banks, all of whom were experts. Their unanimous recommendations were embodied in this Bill, which consequently had their endorsement. Then again, a Select Committee was appointed in 1902, and presided over by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol, which considered the recommendations of the Inspection Committee, and unanimously adopted them as likely to prove conducive to the welfare of the banks. Lastly, the attention of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer had been drawn to the matter. The right hon. Gentleman was anxious to do all he could to aid these banks, and was prepared on behalf of the Government to promise support to the Bill.

Now he came to the clauses of the Bill, each of which dealt with a separate matter. The first clause provided that the auditors of savings banks need not give security. The Committee had found that the duties of the auditors did not involve anything like the responsibility which was cast on the managers and clerks. One of the best guarantees of the safety of a bank was to be found in a frequent change of auditors, and it was thought that, if security were always insisted upon, it might prove an obstacle in the way of securing the services of chartered accountants, who might be willing to give them for one year only; in these cases security would be unnecessary. The second clause enacted that the Government, through the National Debt Commissioners, might allow the expenses of forming penny banks. It would be admitted that there had been no better movement in connection with our elementary schools than the establishment of these banks, and that they had done much to help and strengthen the savings bank movement throughout the country, by inculcating in young children habits of thrift. The next clause gave power to superannuate. The absence of that power had, in some instances, been a temptation to the trustees to wind up the bank, in order that compensation which could not be given in annual payments might be given in a capital sum to those who had grown old in the service, and the continued employment of whom did not conduce to efficient working. There was also a clause enabling banks to sell, exchange, and let their bank properties on advantageous terms. This power could only be exercised with the consent of the National Debt Commissioners, on the recommendation of the Inspection Committee. Clause 5 dealt with the amalgamation of banks, and assimilated savings banks in this respect to the friendly and industrial societies and provident societies. It was quite obvious that in neighbourhoods where there might be declining banks, or where branch banks were rapidly growing into larger institutions, the power of amalgamation was almost essential. For that purpose also the consent of the National Debt Commissioners and of the Inspection Committee was necessary. The next clause was wide and of rather more importance. Prior to the Act of 1891, there were sixteen or twenty savings banks which had special investment funds. Those departments were accessories of the bank and carried on the habits of saving to larger amounts. He thought the Committee of 1891 made a mistake when they restricted that power to the then existing banks. It was desirable to restore this power to banks, with £200,000 of deposits, which were open daily, and the clause assimilated the English practice to Scottish practice. It would enable trustees by investing in local securities of which they had knowledge—such as municipal investments and School Board rates—to serve local interests while obtaining really good securities. The last clause provided that there should no longer be an obligation to give notice, when the depositor's account had reached £200, that it would be invested in stock. Under this clause the deposit would rest in the bank, but, while the £200 would continue to bear its interest, any excess beyond that amount would not be interest-bearing so long as no directions were received from the depositor for its investment in Consols. This provision was, perhaps, more important in a pecuniary sense to the Post Office Savings Bank than to trustee savings banks, because he believed that in the case of the former the cost of sending out these notices amounted to some £33,000 annually and involved in addition a good deal of clerical work. The provision might also avoid a repetition of domestic differences which had not been unknown when, in consequence of the sending of the notice to the house, the fact that the deposit existed, which had been kept secret up to then, was disclosed either to the master or the mistress of the household as the case might be. That clause had not been put forward by the trustee savings banks, but it was one of the recommendations of the Committee, and he had thought it proper to include it in the Bill. He believed that expenditure on savings banks was a gain to the State, not only by saving people from the rates, but also by accumulating a larger national capital. He could not agree that the larger depositors were rich people who took advantage of the banks. He believed that many of them were the depositors who had lived longest and saved most, and were therefore the most meritorious class of depositors. He believed, further, that the Bill would conduce to the efficient and economical administration of savings banks, and seeing that it bore on its back the names of hon. Members belonging to all Parties in the House, that it had the approval of a Parliamentary Select Committee and of the Inspection Committee, and that further it was endorsed by the Government who were the guardians of the national purse, he earnestly trusted that it would be read a second time that afternoon.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.) said that at the request of the governors of one of the oldest trustee savings banks in the provinces he heartily supported the Bill. He had the greatest admiration for the noble work done by the managers and officials of these banks. Although in Committee some slight modifications might have to be introduced he felt that for the purposes of Second Reading very little criticism was needed. There was one point he would like especially to refer to. Some thousands of penny banks had been established in connection with our public elementary schools, but unfortunately there were no funds out of which the expenses of management could be defrayed. It was too much to expect that officials who gave their services voluntarily and gratuitously should pay them out of their own pockets, and it was equally undesirable to reduce the interest allowed on deposits. They had heard from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he had no intention of reducing the interest on deposits in the Post Office Savings Bank. He believed the provisions of this Bill would assist the banks to work with renewed vigour, and for this and other reasons he begged cordially to support the Second Reading.

MR. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby) had pleasure in supporting the Bill upon the authority of one of the largest savings banks of the country. The Liverpool Savings Bank had over 123,000 subscribers, and he had been requested on their behalf to support his hon. friend. It was very gratifying that the proposals of the Select Committee had been received with so much approval. The terms of the Bill had been lucidly set forth, but he might point out that when amalgamations took place, although savings banks might hold buildings, yet they had no means of giving a title when they desired to part with them. That was a point to be dealt with. Another was that, as far as funds allowed, pensions should be allowed to workers who had spent their lives in the service of the community. It was quite true that the real aim of most investors was security rather than high interest, and he certainly thought that when a subscriber had put together £200 he might fairly be considered to have learnt the art of thrift, and to be capable of forming right opinions as to the proper investment of his money. Having regard to the difficulty some banks had in meeting their expenditure, he fully approved of Clause 7, by which some economy might be effected without any real injustice being done to the subscribers. It was unnecessary to dwell further on the merits of this short but useful Bill; he cordially wished it success, and hoped the House would give it favourable consideration.

SIR JAMES HASLETT (Belfast, N.), speaking on behalf of the savings bank of Belfast, heartily endorsed the Bill, which he thought would be a benefit to savings banks generally. Public savings banks were taking the place of private lending associations in Ireland, and it was for the welfare of the country that some public form of bank should be general, with Government audit, and management without personal interest. The Belfast Bank was one of the most successful in Ireland, and it cordially supported the Bill.

SIR WILLIAM TOMLINSON (Preston) as a trustee of a large and successful savings bank, heartily approved of the Bill. The elasticity of administration which the Bill would afford had long been desired. Certain points would require consideration in Committee, but the Bill as a whole he cordially supported.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.) congratulated the mover on the unanimity with which his Bill had been approved, and did not propose to raise any discordant voice. On behalf of the Government he welcomed the measure, and the hon. Baronet would have what assistance he could give in passing it into law. He reserved the right to move some Amendment in detail in Committee if he found that course to be necessary; but there was complete agreement as to the object to be attained, which was to embody in legislation the recommendations of the Committee presided over by the right hon. Baronet the Member for West Bristol. The Bill dealt exclusively with trustee savings banks, and did not touch those recommendations of the Committee which had reference to the Post Office savings banks. He had announced the other night that it would be his duty to propose legislation to carry out certain recommendations made by the Committee in reference to the Post Office banks, and also in regard to the trustee banks in respect of the deficiency annuity, a subject with which his hon. friend's Bill naturally did not deal. He had not yet arrived at a definite conclusion as to the form in which those Amendments could be most conveniently proposed to the House. It might be possible for him to move the insertion in this Bill of clauses embodying what he desired. It might, on the other hand, be more convenient to bring them in as a short Bill of his own and to refer the Bill to the same Committee, with an Instruction to the Committee to consolidate the two measures. He would consider which course would be the more advisable. Under the conditions now prevailing he did not think it necessary, or even right, to make a proposal to reduce the interest payable, and the changes he sought to make were such as he believed would receive the unanimous approval of the House.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE (Norwich) expressed his satisfaction with the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Everybody would be glad to know that the right hon. Gentleman was prepared, not only to support the Bill, but also to make the measure more effective in its working. For the last year or so savings banks deposits had not increased with the rapidity that might have been expected, but there had been an uncertain feeling with reference to the question of interest and also as to the future working of savings banks, whether private or Post Office. The statement of the right hon. Gentleman would give general satisfaction, and doubtless tend to the more rapid increase of deposits. He was in the same position as other hon. Members, inasmuch as he had been requested by the largest trustee bank in East Anglia to support this Bill. He congratulated his hon. friend on finding the House so unanimously prepared to accept the measure, and he hoped it would pass into law in the course of the present session.

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, Etc.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order for Second Reading read.

* **SIR WILLIAM HOLLAND** (Yorkshire, W.R., Rotherham), in moving the Second Reading, said that this Bill had been under consideration on several previous occasions, and if the House was to be at all consistent it would again pass the measure by a substantial majority. The kinds of machinery to which the Bill related were not now, in practice, rated by those unions in which the machinery most largely existed; therefore the passing of the Bill would not in any way interfere with existing practice. Whilst it could not be said that the promoters of the Bill had any reason to complain of the practice in most of the unions of the country, their desire was to crystallise that practice and to remove certain obscurities which sometimes led to considerable litigation. On the other hand, the owners of the kinds of machinery and tools covered by the Bill had no reason to complain of the decisions which had been obtained from the Courts of Law. When previously before the House the Bill was opposed by the city of Sheffield because of a false alarm as to the probable effect of the Bill on the present rating practice in that large industrial centre. He was assured, however, by leading authorities that the Bill would in no sense interfere with that practice, but that the heavy machinery and tools at present assessed within that borough would continue to be so assessed. On the other hand, if the practice which obtained in a few unions, where there was very little loose machinery and tools, was universally followed, a serious additional burden would be imposed upon the industries employing that machinery, an additional burden which might even involve the ruin of some concerns. In most of the constituencies represented

in this House the provisions of the Bill were a matter of indifference, as the loose machinery and tools affected did not there exist in any large quantity; but in a few constituencies, such as Oldham, Bolton, and Preston, in Lancashire, and Bradford, Huddersfield, and Leeds, in Yorkshire, it was a life and death matter that the principles embodied in the Bill should be approved by the House. Seeing the matter was of such importance, it was no wonder that the textile operatives were as strongly in favour of the Bill as the employers themselves. The Bill had been before the House on so many occasions that Members were doubtless familiar with the arguments in its favour; he would, therefore, merely say, in conclusion, that in this, as in many other matters, Scotland set a good example, for the Scotch practice was one of which the promoters of the Bill approved and which they desired to see adopted in England. If the system of carrying over Bills from one session to another had been in existence this Bill would have been the law of the land long ago, as it had often reached an advanced stage, but had never been able to complete its stages through both Houses. With the hope that it would be more successful this session, he begged to move that it be now read a second time.

*MR. CHAPMAN, (Cheshire, Hyde) on rising to second the Bill, said that according to its opponents the theory of this Bill was that as soon as a man had saved a little money, obtained a patent, taken a shed, the power being supplied by his landlord, and put therein his movable machinery, down would come the valuer, with the result that the industry would be practically strangled at the beginning. That was not the object at all. The Bill aimed at relieving small industries from increased taxation; consequently it would encourage them. It affirms that machinery provided by a tenant should not increase the value of the buildings. The Bill did not propose to take the taxes off all machinery. The landlords' fixed machinery, such as boilers, shafting, and so on, was taxed already, and it would not be affected by the Bill; the intention was to prevent the tenant who moved his machinery into a building from being taxed out of existence by the rates on the valuation of the building. Moreover, the Bill would diminish the enormously costly litigation caused by appeals to quarter sessions. In the Hunslet Union, Leeds, fifty-five members of the Machinery Users' Association had entered appeals against their assessments. Under the old assessments the gross estimated rental amounted to £45,000 (taking round figures) and the rateable value to £33,000; under the new assessment the gross estimated rental was £94,000, an increase of 108 per cent., and the rateable value £62,000, an increase of 85 per cent., the increases being in consequence of the rating authorities having taxed the tenants' machinery on the premises. The cost of this litigation was estimated to be about £400 in each case, or a total of £20,000, the whole of which would probably have been avoided had this Bill been in force. That was a very startling and instructive instance. He read a letter from Messrs. Early & Co., Witney Mills, Oxford, saying, "It is of the greatest importance to us, as the *local* manufacturers are rated at double what they would be in the *North*, and it seriously handicaps us in competition." He gave one example. He was informed on the best authority that the well-known Westinghouse manufactory established recently near Manchester would have been taxed out of existence had not the Corporation wisely followed the lines of valuation laid down in this Bill, a line adopted usually in Lancashire. The Bill would prevent the hampering of small trades, and it would encourage the establishment of small manufactures. These were important considerations in view of the present industrial depression, for by encouraging the growth of home industries, with the consequent increase of employment for working men, the country at large would be benefited. He begged to second the Motion for the second reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

SIR JAMES JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street) said he had often protested against the name given to this Bill, as it created the greatest confusion throughout the country. That confusion, however, was gradually disappearing, and as the people got more thoroughly to understand the real principle of the Bill their objection to it increased. The Bill was called a "Rating of Machinery (Exemption) Bill," but the impression in many districts was that it was a Bill to rate machinery, not to exempt it. The example of Scotland had been cited. He understood from a prominent Scotch Member that many Scotch municipalities were now beginning to adopt the English system in their assessments, and to rate the machinery in connection with their mills. The debates on the subject had been of great service in opening the eyes of various localities to the disadvantages which would ensue if the Bill were passed. Complaint was made of the cost of litigation. But what was its cause? In the North of England they knew what the law was, and they had made their assessments in accordance therewith. In an evil moment there was a dispute in the Midland district between a municipality and certain traders; a gentleman from Sunderland was called in to make a fresh assessment, and he made it in accordance with what they in the North believed the law to be. Litigation ensued, and the Courts upheld the view of the North, with the result that the municipality adopted that method of assessment. This Bill practically proposed to punish those who had been conforming to the law, and to bring the law into agreement with the practice of those who had been systematically breaking it. It was not proposed to exempt all machinery. Greater injustice than at present existed would be created, because the Bill proposed to exempt certain machinery and to rate other machinery. He could not think that this was a time when the House ought to narrow the area of taxation. They were constantly hearing of the injustice that personalty was not taxed in the same way as real property, but if there was any class of personalty which ought to be rated surely it was that which increased the productive power of an industry.

Sir James Joicey.

The hon. Member opposite said this Bill was intended to assist the working classes, but he was satisfied it would have the opposite effect. This measure did not deal with industries as a whole, and surely workers were as much in need of consideration as the owners of machinery. This Bill proposed to take the tax off machinery and put it on to the workmen, and he protested strongly against any such process. The rates and taxes of this country were going up by leaps and bounds. Municipalities found their expenditure increasing, and all kinds of public improvements were wanted, and the difficulty they were experiencing was to find money for them. Public bodies were unable to carry out these much-needed improvements owing to increases in the local rates. Personally he could not see how this measure was likely to benefit any particular industry simply by taking this burden off the manufacturers and placing it upon the general public. This was in reality a manufacturers' Bill. Had hon. Members considered how this measure would affect some of the towns in the North of England. Take Gateshead as an example, where 95 per cent of the inhabitants belonged to the working classes. At the present time machinery there was rated, but if this Bill were adopted the rateable value would be considerably reduced, and who would pay the amount which the manufacturers had been relieved of? Why the population of Gateshead. Consequently the only effect of this Bill would be to transfer a burden from the manufacturer and place it upon the public at large. That was not a justifiable method of attempting to deal with this question, and as a matter of fact it was equivalent to a reduction of the wages of the workers. If the ratepayers had to pay higher rates upon their houses the rents would increase, and therefore this Bill was equivalent to a reduction of wages. At the present time there was a good deal of talk about the housing of the poor, and how would this measure affect that question? It would operate against the housing of the poor, and surely this was not a time to reduce rateable value when they had so many expenses looming in the distance. The present system of assessing the rates had been given in the past as security for loans, and what was now proposed by this Bill would interfere with the security which had been given for those advances. If they reduced the rateable area they must necessarily reduce the value of the security, and this House ought to hesitate before pursuing any such policy. If, in a mining district, they introduced machines for coal cutting to do away with the severe labour in mines, and in order to produce 30 or 40 per cent. more coal, under this Bill they would have to pay increased rates and that would be simply taxing the output.

This Bill only dealt with a small part of a large question, and he could not think that the House would be well advised to begin to deal with the great question of rating in a piece-meal fashion. The Government ought to deal with the whole question of rating, and he thought it would be very unwise to tie the hands of any future Government which attempted to deal with this matter by passing this measure. This was a question which ought to be dealt with by the Government and not by a private Member's Bill. He thought the time was fast coming when, instead of people being gathered together in large mills, they would have smaller industries in the country, the motive power being supplied by electricity. He had opposed this Bill for many years, because he contended that, if they were to rate personal property, they ought not to exempt machinery, which would simply relieve the manufacturers at the expense of the working classes. [Cries of "No, no!"] He maintained that that was so. He recognised rates as a handicap to all industries, but they could not get along without taxation, and it was the duty of the House of Commons to see that taxation was levied justly upon all classes, whereas this Bill only created another injustice. He begged to move that this Bill be read a second time this day six months.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport) said that although they had heard this measure debated over and over again, on this occasion they had not heard one single new argument. Therefore the difficulties which stood between them on the last occasion still existed, and they were still waiting for an answer to the arguments used in previous debates upon this subject. They had just been listening to the giants of commercial enterprise, but he wished the House to bear in mind that the great industrial communities were not the only communities concerned in legislation. This was to a certain extent a struggle between the rural and the industrial interests. [Cries of "No, no."] At any rate, agriculturists thought they knew what was best for agriculture better than hon. Members representing industrial centres, and they thought that this Bill would have an unhappy and unfortunate effect upon some of the industries they were sent to support. It had been said that if they could tax the whole of the personalty there might be something said for rating machinery, but it was no argument to say that because they could not carry out a reform all at once it was wrong to perform a little measure of justice. As a matter of fact, they all knew that under the law, as it stood, all personalty was liable for rates, and it was only by a sort of accident that a person escaped. Those who were connected with the land considered that they had at present a very heavy and direct grievance by this escaping of personalty from taxation, and it was solely because the owners of land were a long-suffering race, and had not the same power of making themselves heard, that the land was suffering at present from those unjust burdens which had been so long imposed upon it. This extremely unfair condition of things had been allowed to go on too long, and they were looking forward to an alteration in the existing state of affairs through reform in local taxation. Last year he was very much struck by an argument used by the hon. Member for Oldham, who said that if they could not rate personalty there ought to be some increase in the Imperial subventions to local authorities. He thought that was a sound and wholesome doctrine, and when the hon. Member had done his best to support the agricultural interest in obtaining such local subventions, then he thought it would be time to support such proposals as were contained in this Bill. Was this an opportune moment to suggest that they should transfer certain burdens now borne by one class of the community to the shoulders of the agricultural class, who would have to take up the burden which others would lay down under this measure? This House had been too much accustomed to hear what was the condition of things in rural districts to entertain a proposal of that kind, they knew only too well how heavily the pressure of the rates affected rural districts, and how difficult it was to carry on agricultural industries, partly on account of the burden of new rates.

Under recent legislation a considerable increase had been laid upon the agricultural community whom they now proposed to burden still further by measures like this. Not only had there been new rates involving a considerable amount of money, but in his own rural district there had been a new assessments of all the houses and hereditaments which came under the Rating Acts. He agreed that some of those assessments were absurd in the extreme, and he would give an instance. Recently he had endeavoured to do what he could to provide better housing for the agricultural labourers in his own district, and he had spent a considerable amount of money upon improving their cottages. Not only this, but immediately after carrying out these improvements, he lowered the rents to those who stayed on the land. Nevertheless, under the new system of rating, in the case of every one of those cottages, although the rent had been dropped, the assessments had been doubled on the ground that the rental was worth more than that which he had chosen to let his cottages for. Of course if a business man was to conduct his affairs upon those principles, a rise of rents would always have to follow a rise of rates. He was aware that many landlords did not follow out this principle, but he wished to impress upon the House if the existing state of things was such as to justify any further imposition of rates, and if this Bill were passed, there would be some additional burden put upon the agricultural community from which a certain section of the people would escape. No doubt he would be told that agriculturists got their share under the Agricultural Rating Act; they did not get under that Act as much as they ought to have got, but if the Agricultural Rating Act was fair and just why should the House of Commons now try to neutralise its value by passing an Act like this. With all due respect to the hon. Member for Rotherham, he still insisted that he understood agricultural matters better than he did, and he thought he had given some good reasons why from an agricultural point of view this measure would be inequitable and unfair.

He had been very much impressed with the argument which had been repeated by the hon. Baronet opposite to the effect that in his opinion this was a Bill which would injure the working classes and help the manufacturers. In this respect he should like to call attention to an argument which had not yet been answered and which was referred to in the debate last year. He alluded to the question which was asked as to whether it was true that the effect of this Bill would be to place a fine upon West Ham to the extent of £27,000 a year, which would be equivalent to a rise of 7d. in the £ on the rates. Assuming that to be a fact, what justification was there for such an immense burden being placed upon that borough? It had been said that the effect of this measure upon large towns in the North of England would be to increase the rates paid by the working classes by an amount varying from 3d. to 8d. in the £. If that was true, how could it possibly be said that this Bill was an equitable measure in the interests of the working classes, and how could it assist in providing them with better and healthier homes? Since this question was discussed last, the House had suffered a great loss by the death of one of its most picturesque personalities. Hon. Members would always remember the speech made upon this question by the late Sir William Allan, who spoke from personal knowledge, and who pointed out the evil effect this measure would have in the borough he represented, and the extent to which it would oppress the working classes by putting upon them a burden which was borne at the present time by another class. Those who remembered that speech would not be very easily convinced that the measure which was now before the House ought to pass. It was difficult to trace out what the effect of this Bill would be upon minor industries in the country. Some of his hon. friends thought that by starting minor industries in country districts they would benefit agriculture. He did not deny that when certain industries were in flourishing condition they benefited agriculture, but they did assert that at the present time, when they desired to keep a larger agricultural population on the land not only to develop agriculture but also to produce a stronger and a healthier population, they failed entirely to see how this measure would do anything but add to the difficulties which at present existed. Until he had heard a satisfactory answer to the objections he had put forward to this Bill, until some conclusive proof was given that the facts asserted by Sir William Allan and the hon. Baronet opposite were erroneous, and until he could be shown that this Bill would not operate adversely to the agricultural interest, he should associate himself with the hon. Baronet opposite in endeavouring to secure the rejection of this Bill.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Sir James Joicey.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) said the hon. and gallant Member who had just sat down had spoken of this Bill, not as it really was or as it would turn out to be if passed, but what he imagined the Bill aimed at. He had quoted a remark which he had made in regard to increasing the subventions to local authorities, but he thought the hon. and gallant Member was mistaken in supposing that this Bill would operate against the interests of agriculture. What was meant by minor industries being discouraged was that owing to the uncertainty of the law at the present time people were indisposed to erect factories in agricultural centres on account of the rating of machinery, because they knew that as soon as they erected their factories, and placed their machinery in them, the local authorities would come down and rate that machinery. Probably nine-tenths of the amount they often put on for machinery might be taken off on appeal, but so long as that uncertainty existed manufacturers were not inclined to erect their buildings and put in machinery in agricultural districts where no such factories now existed. The hon. Member for the Chester-le-Street Division objected to the title of this Bill as being misleading, but there were many other Bills to which a similar objection might be taken. Very often it was almost impossible to give in a few words a name which would adequately describe what a Bill was really meant to carry out. That, however, was a minor objection. The hon. Member stated that in Scotland they were trying to rate machinery. As a matter of fact they did try to rate machinery a few years ago, but the Scotch people knew immediately that any such action would drive industry and manufactures away from the country, and a Machinery Bill was introduced and carried through this House without any opposition which enacted precisely what they wanted for England. So far as the supporters of this Bill were concerned, they were willing to take exactly the words of the Scotch Bill and apply them to England. When his hon. friend the Member for the Chester-le-Street Division of Durham said that machinery in mines was rated, he he was going beyond the actual facts of the case. In some cases machinery was rated. In other cases the presence of machinery affected the rating of the mine in that the assessment of the mine was increased because the assessment was made on the output. There were some mines which were very expensive to work, and where a great deal of pumping machinery was required. He did not mean to say that the presence of machinery made the assessment lower, but the fact that it was wanted tended to make the assessment of the mine lower. He knew nothing about the rating of mines himself, but he had told the House what had been stated to him by a rating authority.

Sir JAMES JOICEY: All the machinery in connection with a mine tends to increase the output, and in that way machinery is rated.

Mr. EMMOTT said it was not the machinery that was rated. The mines were rated on the output. He had stated the case as it had been stated to him by a very competent assessing expert. His hon. friend went on to say that what the promoters of this Bill were aiming at was to reduce the rating area of the country. It was nothing of the kind. It was stated that in Northumberland and Durham, and also in Sheffield, machinery was rated by the rating authority. He did not know whether that was the case or not, but he was told that the assessments made by the rating authorities there were not greater than were made in Manchester or Oldham for similar manufactures. He was certain, at any rate, that there were textile districts in the country where machinery was not rated, and where the local authorities would be absolutely opposed to anything which would bring it within the purview of assessment, from the fact that it would tend to add to the cost of production, and that to do anything which would operate against great industries of that kind would be a very serious and a very unwise matter. There were stated to be two principles at work. One principle was carried out in one part of the country, and the other in other parts. He was not able to give the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite the information he asked in regard to Oldham, because he did not know the circumstances. He hoped the hon. and gallant Gentleman would agree with him that, if two principles directly opposed to one another were being carried out in different parts of the country, the fact showed that there was a case which should be examined by a competent and independent authority on behalf of the Government, and that some settlement of the question should be made. He appealed to the Secretary to the Local Government Board, if he should speak this afternoon, to state what the Government was going to do in the matter. The King's Speech promised a Bill dealing with the question of assessment. As soon as the question was dealt with, in order to put the assessing system on one uniform basis, the question of the rating of machinery must also be dealt with. They could not in a great country like England put manufacturers on a different basis from those in Scotland. If they attempted to do that, Lancashire and Yorkshire would be practically in revolt on this matter.

This was a question on which an enormous amount of misunderstanding existed, and it was for that reason that he said there ought to be a thoroughly independent inquiry. If they were going to carry out in connection with the cotton industry what was carried out in Northumberland and Durham, he feared it would mean absolute disaster, and therefore he hoped that hon. Members would see that this was a very serious matter which wanted more investigation than it had yet received. It was a matter on which they could not afford to depart, with regard to the textile industries at any rate, from what had been carried out in the past. The hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite said that if he would help him to get a large subvention from Imperial sources for agriculture, he would do what he could in their case. He would remind the hon. and gallant Gentleman that if there was one place which suffered from the system of Imperial subvention, and which would benefit by the alteration of that system in the direction which the Royal Commission suggested, that place was the constituency for which he had the honour to sit. He ventured to say that Oldham would benefit much more than any agricultural county if that principle were carried out.

Sir SAMUEL HOARE (Norwich) said this question had been before the House on several occasions, but those who had supported the Bill, year after year, in the past would continue to do so, knowing that a great grievance existed in the country. The hon. Baronet who moved the rejection of the Bill criticised the name, but that could be easily altered. He asked the House to confirm the decision which had been arrived at again and again with reference to this measure. There was admittedly a grievance felt by many people in the country in connection with this matter, and, if that was so, something ought to be done to remedy it. He wished to speak on behalf of the city of Norwich, whose industries were of the greatest inportance to it, and where they laboured under difficulties which did not exist in the North of England. It was a city which depended a great deal for its prosperity on agricultural prosperity. He therefore claimed to be able to speak on this question both from the point of view of manufacturing industry and agriculture. In answer to the suggestion which had been made that this was a Bill introduced by employers and manufacturers he would state, as showing that this was not so, that he had received memorials signed by the workers in connection with fifteen of the manufactures of Norwich urging him in their interest to support this measure. The chamber of commerce in his city had also asked him to support it. He should like to ask his hon. and gallant friend whether movable machinery was assessed in the agricultural district in which he lived. His impression was that it was not, for it was assessed in comparatively few places at the present time. The city of Norwich was one, and that was why they felt the grievance there. It was because the system of rating machinery was not uniform that those in the districts which were assessed felt that there was an uncertainty which ought to be done away with. It was necessary to bring forward the same arguments year after year, but it appeared to him that the arguments in favour of the Bill were stronger now than they were last year in view of the experience they had had. A great deal had been heard during the past year about the desirability of furthering the industries of this country. They had seen their village or small town industries drifting to the great centres. He thought this had been a very serious matter for the agricultural districts. He would put this case to his hon. and gallant friend. Supposing there were some old buildings in his district which he did not want, and three or four active and enterpising young men with a turn for machinery rented them for a small amount. Some movable machinery was put in, and these young men started a little industry which one day might be a great industry in that district. The very moment they put that machinery into these disused premises the assessment would be raised. Such cases had happened, and that was not the way to encourage young men to start small industries. There were places in the United States, and he believed also in Germany, where, in order to encourage the starting of industries, the buildings were either free from rates, or only a very small assessment was imposed, until the industries were properly established. He hoped his hon. friend the Secretary to the Local Government Board would be able to say more to-day on the question than the House had heard from the Front Bench on previous occasions.

Mr. GEORGE WHITELEY (Yorkshire, W.R., Pudsey) said he had taken an interest in this question for many years, and he was bound to say that their labours with regard to the Bill did not seem to be much nearer fruition than they did some years ago. The question was a very narrow one. Movable machinery was personal property, and the question was, was it right or desirable that personal property should be rated? He was entirely of opinion that it should be; but at the present time it was not rated generally, and if that was so, was it right or fair that one peculiar productive form of personal property should be rated? If they were to be logical, consistent, and fair-minded in this matter they would, with regard to the agricultural interest, be obliged to rate ploughs, harrows, and theshing machines; and in connection with the coal industry they must rate trolleys, pickaxes, and shovels. At Liverpool docks and wharves were heavily rated, but to be consistent, why should they not also rate even the ships plying on the Mersey? At present the agricultural interest was receiving half of its rates from the Exchequer, and the people in the towns were obliged to contribute a large portion of that relief to the counties where the rates were only half what they were in the towns. He ventured to say that land was not rated at all. It was income derived from land that was rated, and why should income from land be treated differently from income derived from other forms of property? He wished to ask the Secretary to the Local Government Board whether it was the fact that shortly after the passing of the Agricultural Rating Act the Government agreed, on the entreaty of Mr. Ascroft, the late

Member for Oldham, not only to withdraw their opposition to this Bill, but to support it.

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. GRANT LAWSON, Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) said that was certainly not the case. His right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board said in the House last year or the year before that the Government, as all Governments had done, left it an open question.

MR. GEORGE WHITELEY said he believed that up to that year the Government of the day did oppose the Bill. He hoped the Government would leave it an open question on this occasion, and also that the House would again affirm the principle that machinery was personal property which should be exempted from assessment.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) said he entirely agreed that this was a narrow question. The hon. Member for Norwich said that a grievance was felt in that city. But was there no grievance on the other side? Agriculturists had considered for years that they had a great grievance in the matter. If there was a grievance, let it be remedied by all means, but let it be remedied all round. If by this Bill they gave a modicum of relief to a particular portion of the community, some part of the burden must fall on other interests. It would fall on the agricultural interest, which, as the agriculturists had always claimed, was more unfairly rated than any other interest in the country. He would vote against the Bill.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck) said the hon. Member for the city of Norwich said many people had a very serious grievance in connection with this matter. It seemed to him a very curious and unsatisfactory proceeding to endeavour to remedy one grievance by creating another. The grievance was only a local one, and by passing the Bill they would create even greater hardships in the districts in which it would operate than existed now. He agreed with his hon. friend the Member for Oldham that this was a serious question, but it was only the fringe of a still greater question, viz., the entire basis of local assessment and local rating. The Government were pledged to deal with the whole question of local taxation, and he thought it would be preferable that they should wait until they had the Government's scheme before them rather than that they should tinker with the fringe of so great a question as was proposed by the Bill. His hon. friend the Member for Norwich said that this was not a manufacturers' question, but he was afraid that he could not subscribe to that doctrine; it was a manufacturers' question almost entirely. The first to get relief by this Bill would be the manufacturers; workmen would obtain no relief, at least in the first instance. The area of rateable property would be reduced, the workmen's wages would not be increased, while rents would rise. In the North of England, at present, machinery was rated, and all those who had carefully studied the question—boards of guardians and town and district councils—maintained that if this Bill passed it would reduce the area of rating, and increase the rating of householders. Hard as the workman's lot was at present, he would find it much harder if this Bill was passed into law. He therefore hoped that the measure would not be endorsed by the Government. They had been told that the principle of the Bill had been affirmed by the House, but hon. Members must have been struck by the fact that on each occasion when a Second Reading was carried, it was by diminishing majorities. That showed that the opinion of the country—which had been captured by the false and fanciful title under which the measure had been brought into the House, was now becoming alive to the real facts of the case and the true inwardness of the proposal. Believing that if the Bill were carried in its present shape it would prove unjust to owners of small properties, to agriculturists, and specially to householders, he would give his vote against the Second Reading.

MR. GRANT LAWSON said that this was a question in which he had always taken the keenest interest. It was perfectly true, as the hon. Member opposite had just stated, that the Government were pledged to deal with the whole question of rating; but when they did so they would deal not only with the question of how light machinery should be valued, or heavy machinery should be valued, or how this and that industry should be rated, but with the subject as a whole. The hon. Member for Oldham seemed to think that the Valuation Bill, which was mentioned in the King's Speech, and which the House had given his right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board leave to introduce, was the occasion to deal with these matters. He was not revealing any Cabinet secret when he said that that was not so. That Bill did not deal with the manner in which a particular hereditament was to be valued, nor with any subject of that description. It dealt only with valuation authorities, and the areas over which those valuation authorities were to rule. He had been asked to intimate to the House what was the attitude of the Government in regard to this Bill. Many Presidents and Secretaries of the Local Government Board of both Parties had declared that the matter was one on which individual Members, if a division was called, might proceed in whatever direction they saw fit. That had always been the general attitude adopted by Governments in the past towards this measure, and it was the attitude which was taken up by the present Government on this occasion. The hon. Member who introduced the Bill, with an exaggeration of language at which he was astonished, said that this measure was a life and death measure for the industries of the country. If that were the case these industries would have been dead long ago. Speaking in an unofficial capacity, and as one who had given great attention to questions of local taxation, he said that with regard to all these rating Bills the attitude he consistently took up was that every man who received an annual benefit from the expenditure of the rates ought to make an annual contribution to the rates in proportion to that benefit; and that, as far as possible, valuation, as forming the basis of taxation, ought to be founded on actual knowledge of facts, and not on efforts of the imagination. The Bill before the House was not supported by any rating authority in the country, except one.

MR. EMMOTT said that it was supported by many.

MR. GRANT LAWSON said that only one rating authority had communicated with the Local Government Board on the subject: and he himself knew that many rating authorities were violently opposed to the measure. To discuss reasonably in that House a proposal for either the imposition of further local taxation or the exemption of certain hereditaments from rating, they ought to look at the matter from the point of view of two considerations. The first was, what annual benefit would the owner of the hereditaments receive from the expenditure of the rates; and the second was, what was the capacity of the owner of the hereditament to bear the rates? He had not heard any hon. Member approach the subject from either of these points of view. No one had attempted to prove that the owners of light machinery received less benefit from the expenditure of rates than the owners of heavy machinery, or, indeed, than the owners of hereditaments to which no machinery whatever was attached. And he was sure that no one would ever attempt to prove that mills containing this light machinery produced less value to their owners, and were, therefore, less capable of bearing taxation than were other works in the same district in which machinery was of a ponderous character. He did not agree with the view that the law in this matter was uncertain and that this Bill would make it more certain. He believed that the law was as certain on this matter as the law of this country would ever be on any matter. The question had been fought out for years. Ever since 1840 it had occupied the attention of the Courts, and at last something like a definite decision had been arrived at. He considered the judgment of Lord Esher in the Tyne boiler case was as plain as anything could be. If this Bill were passed, the whole thing would be again thrown into the melting pot. He did not think it would be fair to ask the House to come to a decision after so short a discussion; but, if a division was taken, he hoped the House would be against the Bill.

Mr. HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle) rose to continue the debate, when

Sir William Holland rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Mr. SPEAKER said that this question had been a long time before Parliament, and although the debate had been only a short one on that occasion, he thought it had come almost to a natural termination; and therefore he would accept the Motion.

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes, 126; Noes, 82. (Division List No. 64.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir Alex. F.
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bignold, Arthur
Black, Alexander William
Bond, Edward
Boulnois, Edmund
Brown, George M. (Edinburgh)
Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Caldwell, James
Campbell, Rt. Hn. J. A. (Glasgow
Causton, Richard Knight
Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbyshire
Channing, Francis Allston
Charrington, Spencer
Coates, Edward Feetham
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Craig, Robert Hunter (Lanark)
Cremer, William Randal
Cripps, Charles Alfred
Crombie, John William
Crossley, Rt. Hon. Sir Savile
Denny, Colonel
Dickson, Charles Scott
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dimsdale, Rt. Hn. Sir Joseph C.
Doxford, Sir William Theodore
Dunn, Sir William
Dyke, Rt. Hn. Sir William Hart
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
Ellice, Capt E. C(S Andrw's Bghs
Emmott, Alfred
Evans, Sir F. H. (Maidstone)
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Fergusson Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Manc.
Finlay Sir Robert Bannatyne
FitzGerald, Sir Robert Penrose-
Flower, Sir Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
Freeman-Thomas, Captain F.
Fyler, John Arthur
Garfit. William
Gibbs Hon. A. G. H.
Goddard Daniel Ford
Groves, James Grimble
Halsey, Rt. Hon. Thomas F.
Harcourt, Lewis V. (Rossendale
Harmsworth, R. Leicester
Helder, Augustus
Hickman, Sir Alfred
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hornby, Sir William Henry
Horniman, Frederick John
Howard, J. (Midd., Tottenham)
Jebb, Sir Richard Claverhouse
Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
Kenyon, Hon. Geo. T. (Denbigh
Kitson, Sir James
Knowles, Sir Lees
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cornwall)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (Accrington)
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Lloyd-George, David
M'Arthur, Charles (Liverpool)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mowbray, Sir Robert Gray C.
Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
Nicholson, William Graham
Norman, Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Parrott, William
Perks, Robert William
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Reid, James (Greenock)
Ridley, S. Forde (Bethnal Green
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Sandys, Lt.-Col. Thos. Myles
Seely, Maj. J. E. B. (Isle of Wight
Seton-Karr, Sir Henry
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Sinclair, John (Forfarshire)
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Spencer, Rt. Hn. C. R (Northants
Stewart, Sir Mark J. M'Taggart
Strachey, Sir Edward
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ
Thomson, F. W. (York, W. R.)
Thorburn, Sir Walter
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomkinson, James
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw. M.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Tuff, Charles
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. H. (Sheff'd
Walker, Col. William Hall
Wallace, Robert
Wason, Eugene (Clackmannan)
Wason, Jn. Cathcart (Orkney)
Whiteley, George (York, W. R.)
Whiteley, H. (Ashton und. Lyne
Whitley, J. H. (Halifax)
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Wilson, John (Glasgow)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm

Tellers for the Ayes—Sir William Holland and Mr. Chapman.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Allsopp, Hon. George
Ambrose, Robert
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.

Mr. Grant Lawson.

Blake, Edward
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Boland, John
Bowles, Lt.-Col. H.F.(Middlesex
Burns, John
Cameron, Robert
Campbell, John (Armagh, S.)
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Cautley, Henry Strother
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Crean Eugene
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Cust, Henry John C.
Davies, Alfred (Carmarthen)
Delany, William
Dickinson, Robert Edmond
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Donelan, Captain A.
Edwards, Frank
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Ffrench, Peter
Flynn, James Christopher
Gore, Hn G.R.C.Ormsby-(Salop
Grenfell, William Henry
Hammond, John
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harris, F.Leverton (Tynem'th)
Hayden, John Patrick
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hozier, Hn. James Henry Cecil
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Jacoby James Alfred
Jones, D. Brynmor (Swansea)
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W.(Salop.
Lee, A. H. (Hants., Fareham)
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Lucas, Reginald J.(Portsmouth
Lundon, W.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
M'Kean, John
Malcolm, Ian
Markham, Arthur Basil
Morpeth, Viscount
Nolan, Joseph (Louth, South)
O'Brien, James F. X. (Cork)
O'Brien, K. (Tipperary, Mid.)
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Kelly, Jas. (Roscommon, N.)
O'Mara, James
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
O'Shee, James John
Paulton, James Mellor
Pemberton, John S. G.
Plummer, Walter R.
Price, Robert John
Reddy, M.
Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
Robson, William Snowdon
Rothschild, Hon. Lionel Walter
Sadler, Col. Samuel Alexander
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Spear, John Ward
Sullivan, Donal
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, D. Alfred (Merthyr)
Walton, Jn. Lawson (Leeds, S.)
Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
Wilson-Todd, Sir W.H.(Yorks.)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir James Joicey and Mr. Fenwick.

Question put accordingly, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question." The House divided:—Ayes, 114; Noes, 94. (Division List No. 65.)

AYES.

Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (Leeds)
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bignold, Arthur
Black, Alexander William
Bond, Edward
Boulnois, Edmund
Brown, George M. (Edinburgh)
Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Caldwell, James
Campbell, Rt.Hn.J.A.(Glasgow
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Causton, Richard Knight
Channing, Francis Allston
Charrington, Spencer
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Craig, Robert Hunter (Lanark)
Cripps, Charles Alfred
Crombie, John William
Crossley, Rt. Hon. Sir Savile
Denny, Colonel
Dickson, Charles Scott
Dimsdale, Rt.Hn.Sir Joseph C.
Doxford, Sir William Theodore
Dunn, Sir William
Dyke, Rt.Hn.Sir William Hart
Ellice, Capt E.C(SAndrw'sBghs
Emmott, Alfred
Evans, Sir F. H. (Maidstone)
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Fergusson, Rt.Hn.Sir J.(Manc.
FitzGerald, Sir Robert Penrose-
Flower, Sir Ernest
Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
Freeman-Thomas, Captain F.
Garfit, William
Gibbs, Hon. A. G. H.
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Groves, James Grimble
Halsey, Rt. Hon. Thomas F.
Harcourt, Lewis V.(Rossendale
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harmsworth, R. Leicester
Hickman, Sir Alfred
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hornby, Sir William Henry
Horniman, Frederick John
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hornby, Sir William Henry
Horniman, Frederick John
Howard, J. (Midd., Tottenham)
Hozier, Hn. James Henry Cecil
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Jebb, Sir Richard Claverhouse
Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
Kenyon, Hn. Geo. T. (Denbigh)
Kitson, Sir James
Knowles, Sir Lees
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cornwall)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (Accrington)
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
M'Arthur, Charles (Liverpool)
Malcolm, Ian
Morrell, George Herbert
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mowbray, Sir Robert Gray C.
Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
Norman, Henry
Parrott, William
Perks, Robert William
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Reid, James (Greenock)
Ridley, S.Forde(Bethnal Green
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Seely, Maj.J.E.B.(Isleof Wight
Seton-Karr, Sir Henry
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Sinclair, John (Forfarshire)
Stanley, Rt. Hon. Lord (Lancs.
Stewart, Sir Mark J. M'Taggart
Strachey, Sir Edward
Talbot, Rt.Hn.J.G.(Oxf'd Univ
Tennant, Harold John
Thomson, F. W. (York, W. R.)
Thorburn, Sir Walter
Tomkinson, James
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw M.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Tuff, Charles
Vincent, Col.Sir C.E. H.(Sheff'ld
Walker, Col. William Hall
Wallace, Robert
Walton, John L. (Leeds, S.)
Wason, Eugene (Clackmannan)
Wason, Jn. Cathcart (Orkney)
Whiteley, George (York, W.R.)

Whiteley, H.(Ashton und.Lyne
Whitley, J. H. (Halifax)
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Wilson, John (Glasgow)
Wodehouse, Rt.Hn. E.R.(Bath
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir William Holland and Mr. Chapman.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland-Hood, Capt.Sir Alex.F.
Allsopp, Hon. George
Ambrose, Robert
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beaumont, Wentworth, C. B.
Blake, Edward
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Boland, John
Bowles,Lt.-Col.H.F.(M'ddles'x)
Burns, John
Cameron, Robert
Campbell, John (Armagh, S.)
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Cautley, Henry Strother
Cavendish, V.C.W. (Derbyshire
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Coates, Edward Feetham
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, William Randal
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Cust, Henry John C.
Delany, William
Dickinson, Robert Edmond
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Donelan, Captain A.
Edwards, Frank
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Fenwick, Charles
Ffrench, Peter
Flynn, James Christopher
Forster, Henry William
Gore, HnG.R.C.Ormsby-(Salop
Grenfell, William Henry
Hammond, John
Harris, F.Leverton (Tynem'th)
Hayden, John Patrick
Helder, Augustus
Hemphill, Rt. Hon. Charles H.
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Jacoby, James Alfred
Jeffreys, Rt. Hn. Arthur Fred.
Jones, D. Brynmor (Swansea)
Lawson, Jn. G. (Yorks., N. R.)
Lee, A. H. (Hants., Fareham)
Loder,Gerald E.Walter Erskine
Lucas, Reginald J.(Portsmouth
Lundon, W.
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
M'Kean, John
Markham, Arthur Basil
Morpeth, Viscount
Mount, William Arthur
Nicholson, William Graham
Nolan, Joseph (Louth, South)
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Brien, James F. X. (Cork)
O'Brien, K. (Tipperary, Mid.)
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow,W.
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Kelly, Jas. (Roscommon, N.)
O'Mara, James
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
O'Shee, James John
Paulton, James Mellor
Pemberton, John S. G.
Plummer, Walter R.
Price, Robert John
Reddy, M.
Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
Robson, William Snowdon
Roche, John
Rothschild, Hn. Lionel Walter
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Russell, T. W.
Sadler, Col. Samuel Alexander
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Spear, John Ward
Sullivan, John Ward
Sullivan, Donal
Thomas, D. Alfred (Merthyr)
Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Wilson-Todd, Sir W.H.(Yorks.)
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir James Joicey and Colonel Kenyon-Slaney.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

SIR WILLIAM HOLLAND moved that the Bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Trade.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, Etc."

And, it being after half-past Five of the clock, and objection being taken to Further Proceeding, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Wednesday next.

THE VOTE OF CENSURE.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somersetshire, Wellington), in moving that "the House do now adjourn," said that on behalf of the Prime Minister he wished to announce that arrangements had been made to postpone the discussion on the London County Council Bill, and that the whole of Monday would be devoted to the discussion of the Vote of Censure. A Motion would be made for the suspension of the Twelve o'clock Rule on that day.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said that the arrangement announced by the hon. and gallant Gentleman was a convenient one, and he hoped that the House would accept it.

Adjourned at twelve minutes before Six o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 21st March, 1904.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with:—Great Northern and City Railway (Extension of Time). The same was ordered to lie on the Table.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

Report from, That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Middlesborough, Stockton-on-Tees, and Thornaby Tramways Bill ought to be dispensed with, provided that the powers to construct so much of Tramways Nos. 1, 2, and 2a as is outside the urban district of Eston be struck out of the Bill, unless the necessary consents of the local and road authorities to the said tramways be proved before the Committee on the Bill, and provided that the powers to construct Tramways Nos. 4 and 5 and so much of Tramway No. 3 as is outside the borough of Thornaby-on-Tees be struck out of the Bill.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the North Wales Electric Power Bill [H.L.] ought to be dispensed with, and the Bill allowed to proceed.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Bristol Tramways (Extensions) Bill [H.L.] ought to be dispensed with and the Bill be allowed to proceed, provided that the powers to construct Tramways Nos. 7 and 9 be struck out of the Bill, and that the powers to construct Tramways Nos. 3 and 5 be also struck out of the Bill, unless the consent of the Warmley Rural District Council to the said tramways be proved before the Committee on the Bill, and that the powers to construct Tramway No. 4 be struck out, unless proof be given before the Examiner that the consents of the local and road authorities have been obtained, and that the Standing Orders applicable to that tramway in other respects have been complied with. Read, and agreed to.

Cambrian Railways Bill [H.L.]. Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company Bill [H.L.]; Manchester Ship Canal (Finance) Bill [H.L.]. Committee to meet to-morrow.

Huddersfield Corporation Act, 1902 (Amendment) Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, the opposition thereto having been withdrawn; read, and ordered to lie on the Table. The orders made on the 19th and 25th of February discharged; and Bill committed for to-morrow.

Ipswich Dock Commission Bill [H.L.]. The King's consent signified; Bill read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Harlow and Sawbridgeworth Gas Bill [H.L.]; Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Bill [H.L.]; Barry Railway (Extension of Time, etc.) Bill [H.L.]. Read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

PETITIONS.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES (METRIC SYSTEM) BILL [H.L.].

Petitions in favour of; of Town, City, and County Councils of Brechin; Buckie; Camberwell; Chelsea; Derby; Exeter; Falkirk; Luton; Newport (Mon.); Northampton; Nottingham; Peterhead Thornaby-on-Tees; Tillicoultry; Chambers of Commerce of Birmingham; Federation of Foreign Chambers of Commerce; Netherlands; Salt; Warrington; Association of Trade Protection Societies of the United Kingdom, representing 50,000; Colwyn Bay Grocers' Association; Eastbourne and District Grocers' Association, representing 40; Cardiff Trade and Labour Council, representing 8,500; Durham Miners' Association, representing 75,314; Rochester Naturalists' Club; Rochester Philosophical Club; Silk Association of Great Britain and

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

Ireland; Somersetshire Chamber of Agriculture; The Physical Society of London; The London School Board; Inspectors of Weights and Measures of Barrow-in-Furness; Cardiff (3); Glasgow (7); Ipswich (2); Kingstown; Newcastle-on-Tyne (3); Norfolk Central; Reading; Bute Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, Limited; Liebig's Extract of Meat Company, Limited; McCallum, D. B. and Son, Limited; Mount Stewart Dry Dock Company, Limited; Priestman Brothers, Limited; and persons signing. Read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

INTOXICATING LIQUORS.

Petition against the sale of, on Sundays; of inhabitants of Weymouth; and Yeovil. Read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Statistics of public elementary schools, pupil teacher centres, and training colleges, 1902–1903.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (SCOTLAND).

Ninth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland, 1903.

BAHAMAS.

General descriptive Report on the Bahamas Islands, in which is included the Annual Report for 1902. Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

SUPERANNUATION.

Treasury Minute, dated 12th March, 1904, declaring that for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the office of assistant legal adviser of the Foreign Office, professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired on the public service are required.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889.

Annual Report on the state of the finances of the University of Glasgow under the provisions of Section 30 of the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889, for the year 1902–1903. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

NEW BILL.

STREET BETTING BILL [H.L.].

A Bill for the suppression of betting in streets and other public places—Was presented by the Lord Davey; read 1^a: to be printed; and to be read 2^a on Tuesday the 3rd of May next. (No. 34.)

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN (AMENDMENT) BILL [H.L.].

House in Committee (according to order). Bill reported without Amendment. Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3^a to-morrow.

REGIMENTS ON FOREIGN SERVICE.

THE EARL OF KINNOULL: My Lords, I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for War to explain why the 16th Lancers have not been ordered home. This regiment left England for India in September, 1890, and went to South Africa in January, 1900, making fourteen years foreign service; whereas the 19th Hussars left for India in 1891 and came home in December, 1903, and the 7th Dragoon Guards went out in 1900 and are ordered home to Canterbury before the 16th Lancers. The Scots Greys also went to South Africa after the 16th Lancers, and are ordered home before the latter regiment.

***THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (The Earl of DONOUGHMORE)**: My Lords, in answer to the noble Earl, who asks me to explain why the 16th Lancers have not been ordered home and quotes the 19th Hussars, the 7th Dragoon Guards, and the Scots Greys as regiments that have been better treated, I would point out that the 7th Dragoon Guards and the Scots Greys were sent to South Africa direct from home and that this was not the case with the 16th Lancers, who were sent to South Africa direct from India. The latter certainly spent a year in South Africa which in normal times they might have expected to spend at home. The other two regiments, however, had spent a longer time away. It is quite correct that the 19th Hussars went abroad subsequent to the 16th Lancers, and therefore might be considered to have claims to have returned sooner. As pointed out last year, however, to a distinguished relative of the noble Earl in another place the discrepancy in this case is due to the reorganisation scheme of 1897. I may add that the 16th Lancers are now under orders to return home next trooping season.

CHINESE LABOUR FOR THE TRANSVAAL.

Order of the day read for the adjourned debate on the Motion of the Lord Coleridge to resolve, "That this House disapproves of the importation of Chinese labourers into the Transvaal under the recent Ordinance until the grant to that country of full representative government."

THE LORD BISHOP OF HEREFORD: My Lords, the more this grave question is discussed the more clear it becomes that the Government have been very ill-advised in the matter, and the more it is seen that they are out of touch on this question both with the feeling of the self-governing Colonies and the mass of our people at home. They have preferred to listen to Lord Milner and the mine-owning interests in the Transvaal rather than to the voices of the other Colonies and of the people here at home. I venture to think that in this matter even the Dorsetshire labourers would have been safer advisers from the point of view of the Government. We have heard one protest after another from the Colonies, from the Australian Commonwealth, from the great Olympian New Zealand friend of the Government, and from the Cape Colony. Everywhere the natural instinct of those who live in British Dominions is against this Ordinance, and that is why we have ventured to move that this House should express its disapproval of it. The very weighty arguments of the noble and learned Lord who moved this Motion and of Lord Stanmore the other night were, so far as I could make out, not answered by the Government. The noble Duke, in his very spirited reply on behalf of the Government, seemed to base his case on two things in particular. One was what I think we may venture to call the bitter cry of the mine-owning interest in the Transvaal. They come apparently *in formâ pauperis*. It seems to me an astonishing thing that they should claim to represent the people of the Transvaal. I venture to think that the true opinion of the mass of the genuine people of South Africa—the real Africanders, British and Boer, the men who have made their home in South Africa, and who are to live and die there—is, so far as we can make out from the ordinary evidence, directly against this Ordinance. I therefore say that this claim of the mine-owning interest is an astonishing one.

Their bitter cry for relief, in the shape of cheap Chinese labour, also seems to a dispassionate observer an astonishing claim, when we think of the history of the matter. We were told in all sorts of ways that when the war was over, and the British flag was once raised over the Transvaal, prosperity would come by leaps and bounds, and that the wilderness would blossom like a rose. But the first thing the mine-owners did was to reduce the wages of the Kaffir labourers. Surely, as far-seeing men, they must have known quite well that that act, together with the reputation of these mines, compared with others, in regard to sanitary and other matters, would of itself tend to create a shortage of labour. Not content with this they seem, as far as I understand the Blue-book, to have taken the whole of the recruiting of native labour into their own hands; and I venture to think that the noble and learned Lord opposite demonstrated on Friday night last that their instructions to their recruiting agents were that they were not to be enthusiastic in recruiting, but rather to put obstacles in the way of an overflow in the supply of native labour. They are not able, in these cirumstances, to pay that which they have promised Mr. Chamberlain that they would pay, and so we have this bitter cry from men who can only be called "splendid paupers." I hold, as the result of my dispassionate reading of all the evidence, that it is this interest which has pressed the question, and not the united voice of the people of the Transvaal or South Africa in general. Therefore, I am driven to this conclusion, that there is a great deal of insincerity in this cry about the need for Oriental labour.

As regards their claim to represent the people of South Africa, I think we may reasonably put up the counterclaim that this matter might wait till we could hear the voice—the free voice—of the country concerned, constitutionally expressed. We have no such voice at present. The Legislative Council is a council of nominees, and, by common confession, the predominant interest and power are those of the mining corporations. For my own part, I hold that it would be quite as fair to argue that the brewers and publicans represent the people of England. The parallel between the two is, indeed, a close one. They are both great, powerful, wealthy trades; they are both managed by men of great ability and business experience—men of the world; and they both consist of bodies who are able to put a great deal of pressure upon the ruling authorities. But there, I think, the parallel stops, and the brewers and publicans have a better claim to represent us than the mining interest has to represent the Transvaal, because they are English citizens; therefore the noble Duke, in basing his argument the other night on these two supports, was leaning on a broken reed.

I turn for a moment from the arguments of the noble and learned Lord opposite to the arguments of Lord Stanmore. So far as I noticed, the noble Duke carefully passed by one very pertinent observation of the noble Lord. The noble Lord, from his colonial experience, very emphatically declared against anything like a servile law for a particular race, a law which is to have penal consequences for one particular race. Now, if you put it into plain English, I venture to think that this Ordinance means something like this—that we say to the Chinese, "We will not have you in the Transvaal as men, but we will import you as animated implements, and by-and-by, when we have done with you, we will export you again dead or alive." And judging from what we have heard of the statistics, before the three years are over a great many of the men who go to some of those mines will have to be exported in their coffins. I say that when you strip the Ordinance of all its outer declarations, and take away the veil over it, it is nothing less than an iniquitous Ordinance. The spirit of it is altogether un-Christian. This is, at any rate, what plain men are saying about it everywhere. You may not agree, but it is what is being said everywhere by those who think about it and speak of it in plain terms. Those of us who move about in the common ways hear more of the common views than some of the leading members of the Government; and what we hear is that in the mind of the English people the real issue is the moral issue. It is the one issue on which the mind of the country is fixed, and, veil it as you will, you have in this Ordinance the essence of slavery. It partakes of slavery. The conditions are servile, and you cannot get away from it.

The spirit of slavery is one which is continually raising its head afresh again and again in history. Slavery was a part of the general civilised life of ancient times, and it was swept away and destroyed by Christianity. Then there came feudal serfdom in the West, and if it has not been entirely swept away it has been swept into corners by the same great power of Christianity. Then there came the negro slavery which had its origin in the greed of adventurers starting in a new country under new conditions, and we know what consequences it has entailed, not only on the continent of America, but on the human race. But that also was swept away by the power of Christianity; and now we come to this crisis, as some men call it, in South Africa, and we are threatened with this recrudescence of slavery in the shape of the importation of Oriental animated implements. I observe, in reading an account of a deputation which waited upon Lord Milner not long ago—the account appeared in what may be taken as a friendly quarter; it was in *The Times* newspaper—that Lord Milner is reported to have said that—

> "It is a monstrous abuse of language to call the conditions of this Ordinance by the name of slavery."

Well, my Lords, I venture to say it would be a monstrous abuse of language to call them freedom. Before we examine the

Ordinance may I take the liberty, as a good many of your Lordships seem to support that view, of pausing for a moment to look at Lord Milner's own language. I do it with reluctance because Lord Milner is not here, and I do not much like speaking even of a public man in his position in his absence. I very much wish he were here, and for two reasons. In the first place, I could have spoken my mind more freely in his presence; and, in the second place, he would be comparatively harmless on these Benches. He would be out of South Africa. I am only expressing the sentiments of a vast number of thoughtful Englishmen when I say that it would be a great boon to South Africa if Lord Milner was no longer there.

Lord Milner, I venture to think, has shown his disqualification for his very high position in the very delicate circumstances in two ways. In the first place his temper constantly obscures his judgment. I look through this correspondence in the Blue-books and the White Paper, and I find again and again that what is presented to him as evidence presents itself to his mind as ignorance, or misrepresentation, or misconstruction. I am not sure that even the word "calumny" or "calumniator" does not appear somewhere in the Blue-book. That temper is just the temper which some noble Lords who have had experience of great positions in our Colonies will say unfits a man to be the representative of the Crown in one of the Colonies of the British Empire. The other disqualification of Lord Milner is this, that his language is constantly running away with him. He spoke of helots when he should have been pouring oil on the waters; he pressed for strong measures when the wise and experienced soldier who commanded the forces there said that South Africa needed peace and not the sword. You have all sorts of strong language scattered about in his despatches—language which is absolutely unsuitable for a great official who should occupy an impartial position. I venture to say that it is a matter of State concern that men of that temper, and with that rasping journalistic pen should not represent the Empire in great positions. My noble friend Lord Stanmore asked a very pertinent Question the other night. He asked, What were the instructions given to Lord Milner when he went to South Africa? The noble Lord then quoted a noble paragraph from the standing instructions of all Colonial Governors. It would be interesting to learn whether that paragraph formed part of the intructions to Lord Milner. At any rate, I feel that when we are accused of a monstrous abuse of language we have a right to reply that these highly-placed officials representing the Crown should be very careful about their own language, because of the immense amount of mischief which they inevitably do by flinging about inflammatory language.

I have often wondered, since 1899, whether Lord Milner could by any possibility have had his instructions from the late Lord Salisbury. In the month of September of that year, greatly fearing, like many of my countrymen, that war was approaching, I did what was, perhaps, a foolish thing. I ventured to ask Lord Salisbury if he could not, from his great position, say some word which would make for peace and which would reassure the English nation that we were not drifting into war. But Lord Salisbury, out of his great experience, gave me an answer of profound wisdom. He said that a man in a high and responsible position, charged with delicate negotiations and heavy responsibilities, should, at a critical moment, be as silent as possible. It is a curious coincidence that there came, not so very long after, the famous speech about "a squeezed sponge" and "the sands running out." I have, since then, felt that if Lord Milner had had his instructions from the great and wise Lord Salisbury, and if all the affairs of South Africa had been conducted by Lord Salisbury we should have had a very different history.

Now, let us look at this charge which Lord Milner makes against us, that it is a monstrous abuse of language to say that this Ordinance partakes of slavery. I venture to think that the fairest and best way of testing the real meaning of the Ordinance would be to put ourselves in the place of one of these Chinamen. Your Lordships know very well that the clever agent of the labour-importing company will depict the prospects which he has to hold out in roseate hues. He will make them as attractive as possible. It is his business to do so. Let us suppose he has enlisted 100 of those men and brought them to Hong-Kong, where they would be face to face with the Government agent. The Government agent, too, has to explain to them the conditions under which they are to go to South Africa. I think it very likely that his picture will not be quite of the same roseate hue, and it is quite possible that some of these men may begin to feel grave misgivings. Possibly the Government agent, if he is very scrupulous, will say to these men, "I think it only fair to warn you that the whole of this labour is not very healthy, that you run a serious amount of risk by going. We are told, on good authority, that seventy per thousand die each year, or 7 per cent.; so that the chances are that out of you 100 men not more than seventy-nine will come back alive at the end of the three years. To be absolutely fair I must give you another word of warning—the mines are not equally healthy or unhealthy. If you are fortunate and go into one particular mine possibly only 3 per cent. will die during the year, but if you are sent into another mine I am afraid 15 or 16 per cent. may die; and if you are all relegated to the worst mines probably only one-half of you will come back alive." Looked at in that way this Ordinance begins to assume a very ugly shape. But the men are by this time in Hong-Kong, perhaps hundreds of miles from home, and they go with misgivings in their heart and eventually land in the compound. We had the other night a defence of the compound. The noble Lord opposite, Earl Grey, told us that some of these compounds are likely to make very happy homes. Indeed he described them as garden cities. I wonder whether he has enlisted Mr. George Cadbury——

EARL GREY: I am sorry to interrupt the right rev. Prelate. What I said was that they were more like garden cities than cages.

THE LORD BISHOP OF HEREFORD: Well, my Lords, if the noble Earl himself had the administration of them I think we should all be greatly relieved, and probably take a different view of the matter, because we know from his public spirit and benevolence that he would take care that these men were lodged under sanitary conditions, but we cannot be sure of that in the case of all the mine-owners on the Rand. Therefore I say that this garden city or earthly paradise may very easily prove a paradise with a very great deal of evil in it and very little good. At any rate, here they are, and they are not allowed to go out except for forty-eight hours, if they obtain a ticket-of-leave. They are to own no property, and, worst of all, they may be transferred from one employer to another, and from one mine to another, without having a word to say to it themselves.

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (The Earl of SELBORNE): If the right rev. Prelate will read the Papers on the Table he will see that that is not true.

THE LORD BISHOP OF HEREFORD: I am glad to hear that owing to some recent amendment of the regulations the Chinaman will have a voice in his transfer from one employer to another. I am not aware that there was anything in the Ordinance which gives the labourer the right to choose the mine in which he is to work. There is another point in regard to the Ordinance, namely, that even an employer, if he found that his labourers were really good and respectable men and desired to assist them, would not be allowed to give them any co-operative share in the property of the mine. He could not treat them as Lord Grey would like to treat everybody in this country. When we go through the Ordinance point by point in this way I say that it partakes of slavery; the general result is nothing less; and I do not think the Lieutenant-Governor is justified in speaking to us who look at it in that way as guilty of a monstrous abuse of language. My belief is that the English people, when they come thoroughly to understand this matter, will have nothing to do with sanctioning this Ordinance as a permanent institution of our Empire. "These Chinamen," the ordinary honest Christian Englishman says, "are men, and the conditions are not such as ought to be sanctioned." What is the object aimed at? It is to give a little higher dividends to the low-grade mines. This South African Ordinance is prepared on the principle that the value of the lives of these men is less than that of a better dividend for some of the low-grade mines. That is the way in which it presents itself to a plain mind looking at the moral aspect of the question.

If our view of this matter is at all correct, what a contrast is exhibited between the British Parliament of a century ago and of to-day. One hundred years ago or thereabouts, as your Lordships know very well, the walls of the other House were echoing the great voice of William Pitt pleading for freedom wherever the English flag flew for every individual, and to-day within the same walls we shall hear the plea for this Ordinance from the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary. What a contrast, when you think of it! Then William Wilberforce was carrying his famous Resolutions which declared that all slave trade was contrary to justice and humanity and sound policy, and that therefore, immediate steps should be taken for its abolition. We know the result. We look upon the result with gratitude and pride — with gratitude because the action of your forefathers swept out of human life such an immense mass of human misery, and with pride because that action made the name of England one of praise among men in the remoter parts of the earth; it put her at the head of freedom-loving peoples and made her the champion of freedom everywhere. We appeal to you, my Lords, that you should disapprove of this recrudescence of the spirit of slavery, and hold on high the traditions of your forefathers. If you refuse to listen to this appeal, those of us who believe that this is a dangerous policy will appeal to a higher tribunal. We shall appeal to the people of England in their constituencies, and we shall appeal with confidence because we are convinced that the people of Great Britain, in spite of all subtle temptations and demoralising influences, are firmly devoted to the principles of freedom and humanity.

*LORD NORTON: My Lords, I must say at once that I disagree entirely with the views of the right rev. Prelate, and I doubt whether they were at all appropriate to the subject under discussion. I can conceive nothing more disastrous to the interests of this country, both Imperially and from a colonial point of view, than that local concerns of our distant Colonies should be subject to the judgment of, and be made material of Party warfare, in the Imperial Parliament. What is actually before the Houses of Parliament this evening? The House of Commons is called upon this evening to condemn the Government because they have abstained from interfering with a local Ordinance in South Africa.

THE LORD BISHOP OF HEREFORD: May I ask is it not a Crown Colony?

*LORD NORTON: I think the right rev. Prelate's view of a Crown Colony is quite as erroneous as it is on the other points, if not more so. Your Lordships are called upon by the Motion of the noble and learned Lord opposite actually to suspend an Ordinance which has been passed in a colony, an Ordinance which is called for by the proper organ of public opinion in that colony as a thing absolutely, imperatively, and urgently necessary to the vital interests of the colony, and gnaranteed, as it has already been, by our Colonial Minister from Crown interference. Everybody is agreed that if this colony had already complete self-government this discussion would have been entirely out of place. What is there, then, in the uncompleted self-government of the Transvaal to make such discussions have proper or useful place in the Imperial Parliament? I am afraid that the discussions in both Houses upon this Ordinance show that there are still many leading men in this country who have a sort of itch for that meddling in colonial local government which lost us all our first great Colonial Empire, and which we are now, after a lapse of two centuries, invited to adopt in the case of our newest Colonies. The right rev. Prelate says that the Transvaal is a Crown colony. I beg leave to tell him that it is by no means a Crown colony in the ordinary sense of the word, such as is Trinidad, which has been constantly cited during the debates on this subject. A Crown colony in the ordinary sense is a colony which is incapable of self-government. It is a distinguishing faculty of the British people to manage their own affairs. Self government is at the root of the power and vigour of this nation. Crown colonies are those which, from the fact that they possess an overwhelming number of an inferior race, or from some other cause, are incapable of self-government; but every colony which is capable of self-government must have it, or we shall simply lose it.

THE LORD BISHOP OF HEREFORD: Does the noble Lord mean that the Colony in question has self-government?

*LORD NORTON: It is guaranteed self-government. It has inchoate self-government. It has been guaranteed that self-government shall be granted as speedily as possible. It is therefore by no means in the position of an ordinary Crown colony, and it certainly would be an abuse of language to take that view. The Transvaal is in the condition of an American Territory on its way to becoming a State. The right rev. Prelate imagines that it is impossible for those conducting the affairs of such a colony to take as wise a view of their own affairs as can be taken by the right rev. Prelate at home. I maintain that we cannot, certainly do not, get such local subjects before us in the same fair way that the Government on the spot can. Is it possible to say that we have the conditions of this Ordinance as plainly before us for judgment as they were before the Government on the spot? I maintain that those on the spot are much more competent to judge in the matter. They have the subject in fact before them. Has the right rev. Prelate the subject ungarbled before him?

THE LORD BISHOP OF HEREFORD: I have the Ordinance before me.

*LORD NORTON: The view of the right rev. Prelate is that the conditions of this Ordinance amount to slavery, and he said it was an abuse of language to describe them as anything else.

THE LORD BISHOP OF HEREFORD: I said that it was an abuse of language to call them freedom.

Lord Norton.

*LORD NORTON: Cannot the right rev. Prelate bring himself to consider the most carefully-guarded conditions for free contract more like freedom than slavery? When the noble and learned Lord introduced this subject the other day the noble Earl who leads the Opposition in your Lordships' House, being very anxious, of course, to support his friend, complimented him upon his speech, but when he came to the phrase "slavery" he immediately abandoned it. He said that he could not adopt that term, and that it certainly would be a gross exaggeration to call this Ordinance, which contains carefully-guarded conditions for free contract, slavery. He tried to soften it by describing the contract as one of a servile kind, but he could not quite bring himself to say that, and so he said it was quasi-servile. But when he proceeded to say that it was proposed to confine these Chinese labourers in cages, the Government could not help protesting against that phrase, and Lord Grey gave us at once the result of his experience during his able administration of Mashonaland, that, so far from being slave cages, the proposed compounds might more appropriately be called garden cities. If we are to discuss this question we should take steps to have the facts fairly before us, and not dressed up for Party purposes at home. Those who judge on such mis-statements assume a high moral view, and are obliged to try to make out that this Ordinance was not a question of ordinary legislation. It was allowed that a colony which was in a state of inchoate self-government was able to judge of ordinary matters for itself. But this was a question above ordinary legislation, dealing with high moral principles. The right rev. Prelate summoned the shades of Wilberforce and of the great heroes of anti-slavery to denounce this "abominable Ordinance of slavery." But Wilberforce could not have got for his negroes anything like the liberal treatment which is prepared for these Chinese indentured labourers. The right rev. Prelate has not hinted at what he would propose if this Ordinance were repealed. We know that it would be the absolute ruin of the colony. His proposal, therefore, though based on high principles of morality, has not the completeness of containing any provision for its consequences. If we were to repeal this Ordinance we should simply abandon and lose the chief result of our glorious African victory—the establishment in place of chronic warfare, of a free British colony. The course which the noble and learned Lord asks the House to take would be absolutely destructive of the best and highest interests concerned, without offering any compensation for so great a loss.

VISCOUNT GOSCHEN: My Lords, I am glad that I did not have the opportunity of rising immediately after the right rev. Prelate who resumed the debate to-day. I think it was quite as well that I should have a few minutes to allow the feelings which his speech roused in me to be soothed somewhat before I rose to reply to him. I listened to that speech with deep regret. I do not think that it was a charitable speech. I do not think it was a speech of the kind which would successfully rebuke inflammatory language. No one in this House, I believe, has such an intimate acquaintance with Lord Milner as I have. I have known him for more than twenty-five years, and not only a more public spirited but a more philanthropic man than Lord Milner I do not know. As much as any member even of the Episcopal Bench he would be anxious for the social well-being of all those who are committed to his charge. He has a conscience as acute as that of any man, and he has shown in the most trying times how he has managed to hold an even keel under the most difficult circumstances. Let me remind your Lordships that Lord Milner had the opportunity not long ago of resigning the post which he has occupied, I believe, in the estimation of the great majority of his countrymen, with great advantage to the country. He had the opportunity of being recalled from the post. But to occupy what position? The Colonial Secretaryship. He was deemed worthy of it; and it must have been a most attractive proposal to a man of his ambition. But what did he do? He felt that his work in South Africa was unfinished, and that it was his public duty as a public servant to return again to those terrible problems, to those great difficulties which he found in South Africa; he thought his duty required him to complete the task upon which he had been engaged. We have heard language from the right rev. Prelate about Lord Milner not unlike that which has been used elsewhere, in which it has been suggested that he was, as it were, under the influence of the capitalists and the mine-owners. Lord Milner is far too strong a man, even, I should have thought, in the judgment of the right rev. Prelate, to be under the thumb of anybody. He is a man of singularly independent judgment, and he is not likely to be run away with by feelings for any particular class. Now, let me point out what I would call the somewhat uncharitable way, if I may use such words, in which the right rev. Prelate put his case. He said that the lives of human beings are not considered equal to securing higher dividends for the mine-owners. That is language more fit for a leaflet than for your Lordships' House. Does the right rev. Prelate really think that it is for the sake of higher dividends that Lord Milner is a party to this Ordinance?

THE LORD BISHOP OF HEREFORD: I never suggested anything of the kind.

VISCOUNT GOSCHEN: The right rev. Prelate did not expressly mention Lord Milner in that connection. But he said that the policy was for the sake of obtaining higher dividends. Why did the right rev. Prelate introduce the word "dividends" at all?

THE LORD BISHOP OF HEREFORD: The policy is obviously for the benefit of the mining interests and especially of the lower-grade mines. That was my point.

VISCOUNT GOSCHEN: The right rev. Prelate suggested that dividends were more precious than lives. Does the right rev. Prelate believe that the Government is inspired with the idea of increasing dividends. Is that the idea of the right rev. Prelate? The right rev. Prelate is silent. I had hoped he would have repudiated that that was the idea of the Government. The idea of the

Government and of Lord Milner is that without this importation of Chinese labour the general prosperity of the Transvaal cannot be secured. It is not for the interests of any particular class. The whole of the Papers on this subject show that it is the firm belief—I do not know whether it is the right belief or the wrong belief, but, at all events, it is the firm conscientious belief—of those who are governing the Transvaal at this time that the general prosperity, the prosperity of the trading community, the agricultural community, the whole prosperity of the country, depends upon the importation of Chinese labour, not for the sake of dividends, but for the sake of the prosperity of that country for which we have become responsible.

To pass for a moment from the right rev. Prelate's speech, I agree with those who condemn the idea that the Government has in this matter had any other desire than absolutely to look to the interest of the Transvaal as a whole, without any *arrière pensée* of any kind. We have to weigh the question, not of higher dividends *versus* the importation of Chinese labour, but of the prosperity of the Transvaal *versus* the importation of Chinese labour. If the importation of this labour were so contrary to everything that is right, so contrary to every principle that it could not be adopted, then, of course, the prosperity of the Transvaal might have to be sacrificed. But is it so? That depends upon the construction of the plan; and I am sure all will agree that, at all events, the greatest pains have been taken by the Government and by Lord Milner in order to secure that this plan shall be carried out in the most humane manner possible. I agree with my noble friend who has just sat down that it is, I would almost say inflammatory, to liken what is being done in the Transvaal now to the horrors of the slave trade in times past. The lurid pictures of what happened 100 years ago surely are not apposite to the case of the indentured labourers who are to be brought into South Africa by every caution that can be devised. In its more mitigated form I would not condemn that feeling in the country which looks upon this with some apprehension and suspicion. Apart from the use which may be put by political Parties to that feeling, there is no doubt—I admit it to the full—that there is a genuine feeling in the country of anxiety lest something is being done contrary to what they would wish to be the principle of this country. That feeling ought not to be inflamed at the expense of facts. We are in a difficult position. We have here a country for which we have become responsible. The evidence goes to show that the importation of Chinese labour is for the advantage of the country. There is a feeling at home which views this matter with suspicion. I should have wished that there might have been justice done on both sides, that on the one hand it should be recognised by those who are in favour of the plan that there is a genuine feeling of anxiety in the country, and not an illegitimate anxiety, and that, on the other hand, those who share that feeling in its strongest form should be more charitable than some even in your Lordships' House, and recognise that it is not through any callous want of sensibility, but simply from the highest political motives, that this step has been taken—political in the sense that it is for the prosperity of the country. Lord Milner has had a frightfully difficult task from the very first. He has been rebuked for allowing his journalistic pen to run away with him. Lips sometimes run away with a man as much as his pen. Language is used sometimes which is as inflammatory as that which, I think erroneously, the right rev. Prelate imagines is to be found in Lord Milner's despatches. I do not think it right, in these difficult positions in which we find ourselves, that one of high position should assume what I cannot but call the worst motive in this matter.

THE LORD BISHOP OF HEREFORD: I must protest against any imputation of motive.

VISCOUNT GOSCHEN: I cannot acquit the right rev. Prelate entirely of that, because of the unfortunate phrase about "dividends." I am afraid I have spoken with some warmth. It was imposible for me not to speak with warmth when I heard my old friend Lord Milner denounced as he has been. I felt it my duty to defend him in your Lordships' House, of which he is not at all the least conspicuous Member, and I shall rejoice in the time when he can take his seat amongst us on these Benches and contribute to our debates. You will then see whether Lord Milner is not a man of excellent judgment as well as of high purpose, and one who, having risen from the ranks, will, I hope, go down to posterity as one of the most faithful servants of the Crown who has ever worked in its interests.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, whether the opinion of the right rev. Prelate who resumed the debate to-night with regard to this Ordinance be right or wrong, I think that even he, when he reads his speech, will regret some of the expressions he used. He said that the brewers and publicans represent this country as much as Lord Milner's Council represents the Transvaal, and that the Government had better take advice from the Dorsetshire labourers than from Lord Milner. I can hardly believe that expressions of that kind will really convey any more force to the right rev. Prelate, in his cooler moments, than they convey to this House. I am glad that we do not often hear expressions of that kind in this House. I must take this opportunity, like the noble Viscount who has just sat down, of protesting against the manner in which Lord Milner has been alluded to, both by the right rev. Prelate, and also, I am sorry to say, but in a lesser degree, by the noble and learned Lord who initiated this debate. Lord Milner occupies, perhaps, the most difficult position held by any subject of His Majesty, and he is doing, and has been doing, his very best to solve one of the most difficult problems which exists at present in the Empire. In those circumstances one would naturally expect that he would carry with him the good wishes and the charitable feelings of Members of both Houses of Parliament. The right rev. Prelate cannot know Lord Milner, or I am confident he would not have spoken of him in the way he has done to-night. I will undertake to say that no man who knows Lord Milner will believe for a moment that he is capable of being influenced in any way, or of having his judgment biassed, by mine-owners or any other persons.

The noble and learned Lord said on Friday night that Lord Milner was at first opposed to the principle contained in this Ordinance, and that he subsequently came round to it. Is there any reason to conclude from that that he has been dominated and over-persuaded by the mine-owners? May it not be possible that Lord Milner, who is living in the midst of these difficulties, who is faced from day to day by this labour question, may think that the circumstances have altered, and honestly change his mind? Is it not quite clear from the Blue-books that that is what has occurred? With regard to the Ordinance itself, which is the real subject under discussion, I freely admit that, personally, I would rather that the restrictions were absent from it. I do not believe anyone in this House thinks —I am sure Lord Milner does not think, and the Government do not think—that these things are in themselves desirable. It is undoubtedly an undesirable restriction that a labourer should be only allowed to labour at certain kinds of labour, and not be permitted to rise, and also that he should be compelled to dwell in one place. Restrictions of that kind would not suggest themselves to a man like Lord Milner; still less would they be approved without great reason by His Majesty's Government. It is obvious that His Majesty's Government, by not disallowing the Ordinance which contains these restrictions, make themselves liable, as we have seen to-night, to obloquy and misrepresentation. Why were these restrictions invented, and why are they introduced into the Ordinance? They are obviously introduced for the purpose of allaying the fears and prejudices of the white population of the Transvaal, who are afraid lest the Chinese should remain in the country and engage in occupations which they now enjoy.

It is a misnomer to speak of life under these restrictions as a state of slavery. The noble Earl the Leader of the Opposition, as one would expect of him, repudiated that suggestion the other night. He said it would be an exaggeration to call the condition of this Ordinance slavery. We have heard the right rev. Prelate say that the conditions are those of slavery, and that he is going to appeal to the people on platforms in the country, making that allegation. He said the conditions are not those of liberty. No doubt that may be so. On the other hand, in order to constitute a state of slavery it is necessary that a man should be obliged to accept the conditions; but if the Chinese do not like the terms offered they need not go to the Transvaal. When the right rev. Prelate said to-night that this Ordinance was in opposition to the wishes of the great self-governing Colonies he was in error. The Australasian Colonies do not object to the restrictions contained in the Ordinance. What they object to is the yellow man coming at all, and if South Africa were Australia they would equally object to the black man, in the same way as they object to him in Australia. When they say that they thought South Africa would be a white man's country they appear to have left out of their calculations altogether the fact that there is an overwhelmingly large black population already in it.

Let us look at the facts of the case. What is this Ordinance founded upon, and what is the necessity for it? Is there anyone who will deny that at the present time there is a shortage of labour for the mines in South Africa? Lord Milner, in his despatch on 11th January, 1904, says:

> "Despite the unparalleled efforts of the Native Labour Association to recruit, the extent and earnestness of which efforts no one whose opinion is entitled to the least consideration any longer disputes, the number of native labourers shows during the last two months a positive decline."

Then he says that while in January, February, March, and April there was an increase of something like 4,000 a month, it fell in May, June, July, and August to an average of about 2,000 a month, and in September, October, and November the increase ended and a tendency to decline began. He says that the official figures for December are not yet published, but that from a statement issued by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association it would appear that there is a falling off of 470 in the numbers employed by the companies forming the Association, The significance of the figures lies in the fact that it points to stagnation having been gradually reached. They have practically the maximum of the South African supply under present conditions. It appears to me that that establishes most clearly that there is no chance of an increase of black labour in the Transvaal at the present time. It has been stated by the noble and learned Lord that Botha and Delarey were opposed to the introduction of Chinese labour. Botha and Delarey do not deny in their evidence that there is a want of labour even for the farms, and they also say that they are against the introduction of Chinese labour. But what do they propose? Cronje would make a law which would compel the blacks to work, and Botha and Delarey would break up the locations. They would not allow large collections of blacks as in Basutoland or in Zambezia. They would distribute the blacks on the farms, taxing them less provided they performed such service. Another plan was that bribes should be given to the chiefs on condition that they sent labour. Well, my Lords, if this Ordinance means slavery or anything like it, pray what would such remedies as these mean? How long would the people of this country, who are anxious with regard to this Ordinance, stand remedies of that kind?

Is it true that the mine-owners have not done their best to recruit? The noble and learned Lord the other night said that they had not done their best. If they have not, all one can say is that they do not know where their self-interest lies. Does anyone imagine that the Chinese, whom it will take, as I saw stated in a letter by Mr. W. Karri Davies in *The Times* of Saturday, from ten to fifteen pounds to import and repatriate, are going to be cheaper labourers than the Kaffirs, especially when you take into consideration the fact that they are to be able to bring their families with them and to have other advantages which were explained to your Lordships the other night? It seems to me quite clear that no economy, at all events, will be effected by the employment of Chinese labour. Moreover, as my noble friend Earl Grey pointed out on Friday, nearly £500,000 has been spent in attempting to recruit black labour. Is it likely that the mine-owners, who are said to think of othing but their dividends, would have rown away such a sum without any eason? As to opinion in South Africa, is clear that a considerable change has aken place. The noble and learned ord the other night adopted the conlusion of the minority of two against hat of the majority of eleven, and ssumed that the minority of two were ght and that the majority of eleven were isqualified. He omitted to inform your ordships of what appears in a later lue-book. Take the Transvaal itself. n 1903 the Johannesburg Chamber of ines, by fifty to five, voted against the ntroduction of Chinese labour. A short ime ago, by sixty to eleven, that same ody voted in favour of it. Let me now efer to what Lord Milner says in his espatch of 18th January last—

> "I am more strongly confirmed in the opinion hat the public of this Colony are coming more nd more to recognise the necessity of introucing Asiatic labour, and that they approve he proposed legislation of the Transvaal overnment to that end. Indeed, I am now repared to go further, and say that these iews are gaining ground in all parts of South frica.

Lord Milner proceeds—

> "In my last despatch I dwelt upon the gnificance of the attitude of Natal in this tter. The feeling of Natal has been phasised in the past week by the refusal of e Natal Ministry to support Mr. Seddon's proposed protest against the introduction of siatics to work in the mines of the Transvaal, d by the ground on which they justified that fusal, viz., that 'additional unskilled labour' as 'urgently required for the development of e Transvaal.'"

Then he goes to Cape Colony. He ays—

> "It is to my mind a most significant fact that he Progressive Party in that Colony has now uthoritatively pronounced against interference with the Transvaal in the matter, while declaring their resolution to prevent Chinese immigraion into the Cape Colony itself."

Lord Milner continues—

> "In this connection I enclose a very interesting eport of a recent public meeting at Port Elizabeth, at which a resolution was passed protesting against the introduction of Chinese into Cape Colony, but deliberately leaving the door pen for their introduction into the Transvaal."

Later on, in the same despatch, Lord Milner says—

> "One or two Boer meetings have been held uring the week, at which resolutions have een passed in favour of Asiatic immigration. They were not very numerously attended, but they were quite representative. . . . As far as open expressions of opinion go, whether in resolutions of meetings, or signatures to petitions, more Boers can be shown on the side of Asiatic labour than against it. But what, in my judgment, is far more significant and far more convincing than the fact that a few thousand Boers have ranked themselves with the labour importers, and only a few hundreds against, is that the great mass of the country Boers, the 40,000 or 50,000 in the two Colonies, regard the action of the Government in introducing the draft Ordinance with acquiescence."

Therefore it is quite clear that at the present time a very considerable change has come over public opinion. On 28th January Lord Milner says, as regards public feeling—

> "Local opposition to the Labour Ordinance is apparently extinct. . . . At a long interview I had myself with the members of the Krugersdorp Farmers Association, which is the most important association of the kind in the Colony, I found many members favourable to the measure, whilst such opposition as existed was due to misapprehensions very easy to remove. On the other hand, while the majority of the Boers are, as I now have no hesitation in saying, anxious to see the experiment of Asiatic labour tried, they are not disposed to demonstrate in favour of it. They feel convinced it will be tried, and say, 'The Government has all the power in its hands. Let it do what it thinks right.'"

There are other quotations of that sort which make it clear that public opinion in the Transvaal and in the other Colonies is turning and that people are realising that the policy of which the Ordinance is the instrument must be tried. On 8th March the Ministers of Natal sent a telegram in which they stated—

> "It is the opinion of Ministers that, unless tension occasioned by the short labour supply in the Transvaal is afforded immediate relief such as the proposed introduction of Chinese under indenture offers, there is grave cause to apprehend that the financial position throughout South Africa will be seriously affected."

Further, Lord Milner received, on 10th March, a large deputation representing some thirty public bodies and associations and about forty mines in the Witwatersrand district. The public bodies included the town councils of Johannesburg, Boksburg, and Germiston, the Chambers of Trade and Commerce, the Stock Exchange Committee, the Prospectors and Claimholders' Association, and associations of mine managers, engineers, chartered accountants, surveyors, architects, etc. A telegram was read from the Bishop of

Pretoria expressing regret at his absence and stating his belief that—

> "The importation of unskilled Asiatic labour, under Government regulations, is the only solution of present difficulties."

It seems to me that short of a referendum it would be impossible to arrive at what the general opinion in the Transvaal is by any other course than Lord Milner has pursued; and with regard to a referendum it has been pointed out that it would take six months before it could be completed. The noble and learned Lord asks us to postpone the Ordinance until representative government has been established. How long will that be? I do not think it is proposed to establish representative institutions in the Transvaal for a considerable time. Is it likely that this matter can wait for an indefinite time? This difficulty is not the creation of yesterday; it has been in existence almost since the resumption of our government of the Transvaal, and I cannot see how such a strain can continue to be borne for any length of time. I ask your Lordships—Are we to distrust Lord Milner, his Council, our officials, and all those whom they have selected as their advisers in the matter? Lord Milner, as we all know, recognises that the Transvaal is in an inchoate state of representative government. He has done his very best to arrive at the true public opinion on this subject; and is it not assuming a very grave responsibility if, not knowing the circumstances, not living on the spot or seeing the people, we take upon ourselves to refuse consent to an Ordinance which apparently a large proportion of the people of the Transvaal think to be the only solution of the present difficulty?

*EARL CARRINGTON: My Lords, I am not in the habit of speaking for other people, but I wish to associate every Liberal Peer who sits in this House with the words used by Lord Goschen in regard to the personal character of Lord Milner. So far as we are concerned, we re-echo all that the noble Viscount said about his philanthropy, the even keel which he has steered under great difficulties, and his sense of public duty which led him to refuse one of the highest offices in the State. We do not in any way impute evil motives to those with whom we do not agree in this matter; but we are compelled to say fearlessly, not only in this House, but in the country as well, how much we dread the policy for which Lord Milner and His Majesty's Government are at present responsible. No doubt a great deal of heat is introduced into discussions when men feel keenly. For myself, I cannot state my feelings on the subject. I went all through the terrible time in Australia when the Chinese trouble arose there, and, as I have said before, if it had not been for the statesmanship and the courage of Lord Knutsford we might have lost the great and loyal Colony of New South Wales. There has been a great deal said in the heat of the moment which people no doubt afterwards regret. I do not want to complain of it, because on this side of the House we have been accustomed for the last eight or nine years to somewhat harsh language. I think, in passing, I might remind the House that in the first twelve or thirteen lines of the spirited speech with which the noble Duke the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies answered my noble and learned friend behind me there appeared the words, "misconstruction," "misrepresentation," "prejudice," "partisanship," and "passion," and he concluded with the words "wild and mischievous statements." I am well aware that he did not intend to apply those words to ourselves, but still they were applied to those with whom we work and who feel very keenly on the subject. The noble Lord (Earl Grey) in his speech the other night, told the House that the Leaders of the Opposition were playing the game of the disloyal faction. When people feel very keenly on a policy, and think it fraught with great danger to the country and the Empire, they rather resent being told that they are playing the game of the disloyal faction. The Earl of Camperdown referred to-day to a very remarkable letter from Mr. Karri Davies, who, as your Lordships are well aware, is a West Australian and a very able man. His letter is, perhaps, one of the best defences of the pro-Chinese policy, but he spoils it by inserting these words—

> "Who are the best advisers? Lord Milner, Sir Arthur Lawley, the Bishop of Pretoria, the leaders of the Transvaal, or those who have

raised an agitation for Party purposes, knowing and caring little for what is really best in South Africa."

Honestly speaking, I think those words go a little too far. We on this side of the House have as great love for the Empire as those who are introducing this, as we think, most disastrous policy. After all, what does it come to? All we are told is that Chinese labour is a necessity, and for two reasons. The first is, that the Transvaalers want it. I will not again go over the ground which was so well covered by my noble friend Lord Ripon, the cause of whose absence to-day we deeply regret, but will quote the words of Mr. Asquith, who puts the whole thing in a nutshell. Mr. Asquith says—

> "No one has been able to produce any evidence at all in support of the assertion that the bulk of the white inhabitants of the Transvaal are in favour of the scheme."

It is said that white labour is impossible. Is that a fact? Has that been proved? I wonder if any Members of your Lordships' House have read the speech of Mr. Eckstein, who certainly is not supposed to support the opinions which are generally held on this side of the House. He stated—

> "The machine drills in South Africa are imperfect, and, properly improved, they would dispense with 50,000 or 60,000 natives, and substitute a much smaller amount of white skilled labour."

Again, we are told that white labour has been tried and failed. But has it? We know that Lord Kitchener recommended that the Irregular soldiers should be taken on at the mines, and I believe Lord Lovat recommended some of his Highland Scouts to stop in the country and work at the mines, but only one remained; and on account of that we are told that white labour has been tried and failed. I should like to quote to your Lordships the opinion, not of a Radical Englishman, but of the Johannesburg correspondent of *The Times* newspaper, who, on 23rd November last year, wrote—

> "Work was offered to the Regulars in the mines at 5s. a day, with board and lodging."

And he went on to say—

> "Mr. Creswell, of the Village Main Reef Mine, experimented with disbanded Irregulars. He says they were very good in the field, but naturally they never were intended to become hard working miners. Even with this material Mr. Creswell satisfied himself of the soundness of his theory that the mines could be worked with white labour, but as he was never able to get a better class of British labourer the experiment never had a fair trial."

I need not remind your Lordships of the message sent out by Messrs. Wernher, Beit, & Company, and the reasons why Mr. Creswell gave up the management of that mine. *The Times* correspondent went on to say—

> "Chinese labour is at best a confession of weakness, a desperate remedy as a last resource. Should Chinese and Kaffir labour prove inadequate, it will be seen that no salvation can there be found, and the energy now thrown into the acquisition of Chinese will have to be transferred to developing a scheme for attracting a large white population to the mines, and that that would succeed there is no possible doubt."

I put that opinion before your Lordships' House for what it is worth. It is not the opinion of one of those who "try to raise an agitation for Party purposes knowing or caring little of what goes on in South Africa," but the opinion of the correspondent of the great pro-Chinese organ—the Johannesburg correspondent of the London *Times* itself.

I wonder if His Majesty's Government have any real conception of the strength and intensity of the feeling that exists in this country against this proposal? I can hardly think they have. My noble and learned friend behind me, Lord Coleridge, in his excellent, and, as far as I could find out, unanswerable speech, said that no meeting in support of this policy could be held in any large city in the Kingdom. The noble Duke the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies said that was not the case and that there were several places where such meetings could be held. So far as my own personal experience in London goes, I may say that during the recent London County Council election I spoke every night for three weeks in different parts of London, and the first question that was always asked me, was whether or not I was a pro-Chinaman or not. It seems to me that this proposal cannot be defended in any way on Imperial, moral, industrial, or religious grounds. All the self-governing Colonies but Natal are against the proposal, and with the exception of the noble Earl the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, I know of no ex-Colonial Governor who is in favour of the scheme.

The whole body of Nonconformist opinion, the industrial classes to a man, and the entire Liberal Party and Liberal Press are solid against the proposal, and we had (at least we hope we had) the support of that great and potent engine for good the Church of England as established by law.

The remarkable speech which was made by the most rev. Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury on 11th February this year will be within the recollection of your Lordships. With rare courage and true statesmanship he referred to that unspeakable horror of which every man in this House was thinking but which nobody dared mention, and I venture to think I did not overstate the case when I said that his speech on that occasion deserved the thanks of all Christendom. We thought, then, that we had the great Church of England on our side, but a month elapsed and the most rev. Primate made another speech, which I am bound to say filled us on this side of the House with disappointment, almost with despair. He told us that he had had the exceptional opportunity of conversing with a gentleman of very high standing and qualifications and of religious and philanthropic principles. This gentleman had been for many years employed in the philanthropic industry of conveying indentured coolies from China to various parts of the world where indentured immigration takes place. He transferred in addition, as the most rev. Primate rather quaintly put it, three per cent. of the women belonging to these men. He told the right rev. Primate that in the Malay Peninsula and in the Straits Settlements these Chinamen, if satisfied, were in the habit of returning to their own country and bringing back what I suppose I must call their belongings and settling down with their wives and families. I believe that is absolutely true as regards the Straits Settlements, and that might to many minds remove some of the horrible consequences of this indentured labour. But as regards South Africa that is impossible, for these men are not allowed to return. If they try to remain in the country they are to be imprisoned, and a person who harbours one of these people is liable to a heavy fine. If they try to remain they are to be removed by force to the land from which they came, and therefore, the two cases are in no way analogous. I am perfectly aware that at Singapore, which, I believe, is the seventh largest port in the world, with between 150,000 and 200,000 inhabitants, the Chinese are conspicuous among the trading classes. In fact, the great bulk of the population are either Malays or Chinese.

Earl Carrington.

The most rev. Primate went on to say that this agent gave him a great many details which he does not find in the Blue-book, but he did not give the House, in the course of his speech, any of these details which his friend had imparted to him and to which he said he was disposed to attach the fullest credence. While not satisfied with this in the largest sense of the word the most rev. Primate regretfully accepts it on the ground of necessity—a necessity for which he says those in the Colony and at home who are obliged to act administratively in this matter must accept the responsibility. We must challenge that statement. The issue before us to-night is absolutely and perfectly clear. He that is not with us is against us. There can be no washing one's hands of responsibility. We have had an example of that in days gone by When the great Reform Bill was before the House in 1832 the then Bishop of Exeter publicly prayed in this House that your Lordships would reject the Bill, and then prudently left the consequences to the Almighty. That cannot be done in this case. There can be no washing the hands of responsibility. No Member of your Lordships' House, be he cleric or layman, can escape his responsibility by abstaining from voting one way or the other. If this measure becomes law every single Member who does not vote against it will be as responsible as the Prime Minister and all the other members of His Majesty's Government.

THE EARL OF GLASGOW: My Lords, I only rise to say one word with regard to a remark which fell from the noble Earl who has just sat down. He said that no ex-Colonial Governor except my noble friend Lord Onslow is in favour of the Government's policy. I only wish to correct him by saying that as an ex-Colonial Governor I regard the Ordinance as a disagreeable and unhappy necessity; but since the Transvaal

Government have decided in favour of it, I do not feel justified in saying more.

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE: My Lords, I am sure your Lordships are all very sorry for the reason which deprives us to-night of the presence of Lord Ripon and we hope that his anxiety will be shortly and completely relieved. It is also a great misfortune that we have not the presence of the noble Earl the Leader of the Opposition, and we can only wish with all our hearts that his sojourn in warmer and brighter lands may bring him back in renewed health and strength. Now, my Lords, I would ask you to read the Resolution which the noble and learned Lord opposite has submitted to the House, It is—

> "That this House disapproves of the importation of Chinese labourers into the Transvaal under the recent Ordinance until the grant to that country of full representative government."

His Majesty's Government owe a debt of gratitude to Lord Coleridge for the admissions contained in that Resolution. If this importation of Chinese labour is such an unholy, such a vile thing, as Lord Carrington, Lord Coleridge, and the right rev. Prelate have asked us to believe, it cannot be right simply because it is sanctioned for a colony which enjoys self-government. The Resolution is also an admission that if a colony really requires this importation it is reasonable that it should have it. There was a most marked difference between the speeches of Lord Coleridge and Lord Stanmore. Lord Coleridge is opposed to the introduction of Chinese labour on principle. It is an unclean proposal which he would not touch.

*LORD COLERIDGE: Not to the Chinese, but to the Chinese under these conditions.

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE: I quite admit that the noble and learned Lord criticised very severely the conditions of importation, but I ask your Lordships whether I am misinterpreting the noble and learned Lord when I say that he was opposed on principle to the introduction of the Chinese. Does the noble and learned Lord say he is not opposed on principle?

*LORD COLERIDGE: It is not germane to this issue. My objection is to the circumstances of the importation. Whether Chinamen as freemen should be admitted into the Colony is another question. I object to their admission in conditions of servitude.

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE: The position of the noble and learned Lord is the same as that which I understood to be the position of Lord Spencer. Neither the noble Earl the Leader of the Opposition, nor Lord Coleridge, object on principle to the introduction of Chinese so long as the immigrants are unfettered by any regulation. That is, that so far as principle goes, neither of those noble Lords would object to such an influx of Chinamen into South Africa as would entirely upset the labour market so far as white labour is concerned. That is a very important admission. The objection of those noble Lords is not the objection of their followers in the country, who are thinking, not of the conditions under which Chinamen are to be imported, but of the possible injury to the position of white labour and the possible swamping of white labour by Chinamen. Now we have the admission of noble Lords opposite that, so far as principle goes, there is no objection to flooding South Africa with cheap Chinese labour. Lord Stanmore, whose speech will be in your Lordships' recollection, was very careful to dissociate himself from the attitude which he supposed Lord Coleridge had taken up. His objection was in no sense to the introduction of Chinamen in South Africa, but to the introduction under the conditions of this Ordinance. I am very sorry I do not see Lord Stanmore in his place to-night. There is no one in your Lordships' House who has a better right to speak with special authority on this question. He has spent his life in governing His Majesty's Colonies and in protecting native races, and his record in this respect is greatly to his honour and to the advantage of the Empire. But the noble Lord poured scorn on the contention of Lord Coleridge that white labour could be used for mining purposes in South Africa. He brushed it aside as a suggestion which he regarded, with his great knowledge of the Colonies, as wholly impracticable. And then the noble Lord went on to draw a sharp distinction between the condition of slavery and indentured labour. "Indentured labour," he repeatedly said, "is not slavery." What he objected to was the conditions of this Ordinance.

Let me examine briefly the objections of Lord Stanmore. In the first place I must record my dissent from him when he draws a distinction between this Ordinance and what are known as the coolie Ordinances. The conditions may be different, but the principle and the spirit of this Ordinance and the regulations based on it are exactly the same as in the coolie Ordinances of Mauritius, British Guiana, and Trinidad. Why, then, has the right rev. Prelate who spoke earlier in the debate remained silent all those years when Ordinances and regulations have been passed for the coolies in those colonies? The first point I will take is the one which Lord Carrington laid such great stress on to-night and the other evening—the question of morality. Your Lordships will remember the history of the question, and how it has been argued. You will also remember the pledges which the Colonial Secretary gave. I ask your Lordships, have you noticed how those pledges have been fulfilled? Regulation No. 33 of the Ordinance contains these words—

> "Every labourer shall be entitled to be accompanied by his wife and children."

And if the labourer chooses to leave them behind until he sees the conditions under which he has to work in South Africa, he is then entitled to require his employer to introduce them at his expense; if the employer refuses, the labourer is entitled to terminate his contract and return to China at the expense of the importer. Lest there should be any mistake on this question, lest the indentured labourer should not know his rights in the matter, this inalienable privilege of his is inserted in the contract which he himself has to sign, and the words I have quoted are repeated. Is it possible in the interests of morality to go further than that? If the nature of the Chinaman is what Lord Carrington describes, if his standard of morality is such that no Government can introduce him without soiling the national reputation, then the noble Lord is illogical and does not go nearly far enough. If this is really the character of the Chinaman, and if there is a moral responsibility on the Government in allowing his introduction, then the Chinaman should not be allowed to enter the Straits Settlements or even London. But this is far from being a true picture. I have never been in contact with Chinamen, but I have met many of my fellow-countrymen and friends who have, and those most familiar with his character assert that he has strong points of virtue and very strong characteristics for good as well as for evil. Therefore I say that to paint the Chinaman by inference in the kind of colours adopted the noble Lord is not just or fair to the Chinaman.

Then as to the form of contract. I really think that if Lord Stanmore had seen this contract he would have spared us some of his most searching criticism. Regulation No. 3 of the Ordinance provides that—

> "The official—"

that is, the Government official, not the official of the mine-owners or mining syndicate, but a Government Civil servant—

> "mentioned in the preceding regulation shall, before a contract is signed by the labourers, explain to them in their own language the provisions thereof, and also the clauses set forth in the schedule attached to the contract, and shall certify at the foot of the said contract that he has done so and that the labourers who signed the contract did so voluntarily and without any undue pressure or misrepresentation."

The Government, therefore, make themselves responsible, through their own servant, for seeing that the labourer understands the contract before signing it, and he signs it in his own country at the port of his native land. Nor is the labourer left in any doubt as to the conditions of his contract. On page 9 of the recently issued White Paper is the actual form of the contract, which, as I have said, the labourer has explained to him by the Government official before he signs it. It reads as follows—

> "The said labourers shall proceed to the said Witwatersrand district and shall there work for the said C.D."—

that is to say, the labourer is left in no doubt as to the employer he is going to. He signs on for a particular employer. The contract proceeds—

> "or for any person to whom the said C.D. may, with the consent of the said labourers, assign his rights under this contract,"

and so on. The labourer knows for whom he is going to work and also that he cannot be transferred to another employer except by his own consent. Lord Stanmore said the other night that there never was a contract under the coolie Ordinances in which the rate of wages was not inserted. Well, here it is. Paragraph 5 of the contract reads—

"The labourer shall be paid at the rate of ——— for each working day of ten hours,"

the rate of wages is left blank.

LORD TWEEDMOUTH: Can the noble Earl state the minimum rate of wage?

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE: I cannot do that.

LORD TWEEDMOUTH: Then the labourer may sign for any rate of wage he chooses to accept? Is there no minimum rate of wage insisted upon by the Transvaal Government?

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE: I am not aware of any, but I do not think that the Chinaman will in all probability accept less than the Kaffir receives. Paragraph 5 of the contract continues—

"payable on the completion of every thirty days work in the currency of the Transvaal, to commence from the arrival of the labourers on the premises of the said C.D."

There is also a provision as to the character and quantity of rations to be received by the labourer. Paragraph 7 provides that—

"The labourer shall be provided free of any charge with housing, water, fuel, medical attendance, and with daily rations on the following scale: 1½ lbs. of rice, ½ lb. dried or fresh fish or meat, ¼ lb. vegetables, ½ oz tea, ½ oz. nut oil salt, or approved substitute, at discretion of superintendent."

I have troubled your Lordships with these details at some length to show how careful Lord Milner and the Colonial Secretary have been to provide for the points raised by Lord Stanmore. Why has Lord Stanmore, and why have so many other noble Lords and gentlemen in the country, been anxious on this point? Why should they have doubted that Lord Milner would feel acutely his responsibility in the matter? Why should they have had any doubt that two such men as Lord Milner and Mr. Lyttelton would look with the most scrupulous care to the safeguarding of the true interests of the labourer? That is what we have always felt and therefore we had no anxiety. I should like to put the case in another aspect. Is the Chinaman really so incapable of taking care of himself? Is he a simple creature easily taken in and easily misled? Is he on the same level, say, as the Kanaka of the Pacific or the mild Hindoo of Bengal? The Chinaman is notoriously well known for being able to take care of himself. His business instincts are of the keenest, and he will not engage himself to work in South Africa unless he considers it well worth his while, and unless he thoroughly knows the conditions of his existence there.

I admit that there is one great difference between the position of the Chinaman in South Africa and the coolie in the West Indies. In the West Indies the Government is very glad if the coolie will stay, and the main point to be looked at in the bargain is that the coolie should not be obliged to stay but can get back to his native country if he wishes to; whereas in South Africa the Government do not want the Chinaman to stay, and the point looked at, therefore, is that he should certainly go back at the end of his indenture. Now, my Lords, why is this? Do not let us play with this thing and talk of it under false pretences. Is it, or is it not, natural that the South African should desire that the Chinaman should not permanently occupy his country? I am sure the noble Earl Lord Carrington does not desire that he should. Lord Coleridge thinks that the Chinaman should be allowed to enter freely if he chooses and to stay in South Africa. I respect and quite understand that position, but I confess I am more in sympathy with the view of Lord Carrington. I do realise how the working population of the Colony feel that they cannot in the long run compete with the Chinaman as a labourer. But for that reason is it, therefore, wrong to use the Chinaman temporarily for a definite limited purpose? You may think it wrong to exclude the Chinaman permanently. We will not argue that now. Assuming that, rightly or wrongly, it is desired he should not become a permanent resident, is it for that reason also wrong to employ him temporarily for a definite limited purpose? I have heard the word unchristian used; but I have never yet seen any attempt to show why the temporary employment of the Chinaman, if he chooses to come on terms which suit him, is dishonourable or wrong either to the white man who employs him or to the Chinaman who accepts the employment.

I do not think I need attempt to prove that there is a deficiency of Kaffir labour. The noble and learned Lord who introduced this Motion made a most excellent use of all the materials he could find to show that there had been no adequate search for Kaffir labour, and that there was a sufficiency of it. But I think even he, with all his skill, failed to prove his case, and I do not think your Lordships require me to argue against the thesis that there is a sufficiency of Kaffir labour, and that the mine-owners are deliberately refusing to use it. Then I would ask, Can white men be used to make up for the shortage of Kaffir labour? Lord Carrington, with a courage I always admire, has again come forward and asked your Lordships to believe that white labour could be used for this purpose. I have an interesting case on this point from actual experience to which I am permitted to refer. Mr. Weston Jarvis, formerly Member for King's Lynn, served in the late war as a distinguished Yeomanry officer. At the end of the war he found himself with a regiment of Yeomanry 600 strong, as fine a set of men as it was possible to find, and of them no fewer than 150 desired to settle in South Africa. In some cases he succeeded in getting employment which suited them, but in many cases he found that the actual employment desiderated was not procurable. So he made an earnest effort to get these troopers employment in the mines. He arranged for terms, and they amounted, in cash and food, to ten shillings a day. He paraded the troopers, all of whom knew him intimately and had the utmost confidence in him, and offered them this employment. What was their reply? "No; that is Kaffirs' work, sir." And of the whole 150, one man alone accepted the employment, and he threw it up six weeks afterwards, giving as his reason that he found himself called "white Kaffir." You may deplore it. I do not attempt to argue the question whether it is, in human economics, a good or a bad thing, that there should be this marked distinction and class difference between black and white, but that actual experience illustrates a fact of human nature that has to be reckoned with. If you pretend that you can legislate, and ignore a factor of that kind, then your attempt at government must end in failure. Here you have a country in which black and white will not work at the same labour, in which at a certain point the labour becomes black labour and the white man considers himself unclassed if he undertakes it. It is that work which there are not enough Kaffirs to do which we desire to introduce Chinamen to do. And the whole object and motive which Lord Milner has, and the Government in supporting him, is not to diminish employment for the white man, but to give him far greater opportunities of employment, immigration, and settlement.

I cannot ignore what has been really a leading feature of this controversy. The noble and learned Lord who initiated this discussion will forgive me, but I do not think I am misrepresenting him when I say that he made a bitter personal attack on Lord Milner and that the whole gist and sting of his indictment, as was that of the right rev. Prelate, was that Lord Milner was a blind guide and a man of evil influence. I know that is not the view of some of my noble friends opposite—I do not wish for a moment to misrepresent them, or to put into their mouths opinions they do not hold—but you cannot get away from the fact that that really is at the bottom of the speech of the mover of this Motion. In the course of the controversy even the figures of mortality have been enlisted to give the impression that Lord Milner was adding to a hecatomb of black victims a hecatomb of yellow ones. A distinction was made between the apparently happy conditions of the Kimberley mines and the so-called horribly insanitary condition of the Rand mines. The death rate in the Rand mines, it was said, had gone up to 70 per 1,000. The fact, however, was not brought out that that was due to a tremendous epidemic of influenza, for previous to that outbreak the death-rate was just about the same in Johannesburg as in Kimberley—54 per 1,000. I would refer the noble and learned Lord to the evidence of Sir Godfrey Lagden on page 85 of the Blue-book, in which he says—

> "There is nothing very exceptional in the death rate of Johannesburg compared with Kimberley."

Next, my Lords, I should like to analyse the statements that have been made as to the public opinion in our self governing Colonies on this subject. There is no doubt that public opinion in New Zealand and the Commonwealth of Australia is against this Ordinance. In my opinion these Colonies have an absolute right to express their opinion. I am very glad they should, but I think it is given under a misapprehension of the circumstances of the case. It is a feature of the controversy that I most regret that these Colonies should be in antagonism to the home Government upon it, misunderstanding, as I think they do, the true facts of the case. It is not true, however, to say, as Lord Rosebery did at Newcastle the other day, that all the self-governing Colonies are opposed to this policy. We have heard nothing either from Canada or from Newfoundland. I understand that public opinion in Cape Colony is hostile to it, but, on the other hand, Natal is favourable. If your Lordships will turn to page 3 of the White Paper you will see the telegram from Acting-Governor Sir H. Bale to Mr. Lyttelton, as follows—

> "I am asked at the request of Ministers to send you the following message, in which I fully concur: 'It is the opinion of Ministers that, unless tension occasioned by the short labour supply in the Transvaal is afforded immediate relief, such as the proposed introduction of Chinese under indenture offers, there is grave cause to apprehend that the financial position throughout South Africa will be seriously affected.'"

Then, as regards the Transvaal, is there anybody who seriously contends that the British in the Transvaal are opposed to the introduction of Chinamen? If your Lordships will turn to pages 7 and 8 of this White Paper you will see a most graphic account given by Lord Milner of the deputation that waited upon him. The deputation represented some thirty public bodies and associations, including the town councils of Johannesburg, Boksburg, and Germiston, the Chambers of Trade and Commerce, the Stock Exchange Committee, Prospectors and Claim-Holders Association, and associations of mine managers, engineers, chartered accountants, surveyors, architects, etc. And, to show how unanimous public opinion was, not only the Bishop of Pretoria but the Free Church Council of Johannesburg also, expressed approval. I do not know whether your Lordships saw that there was a message from the Free Church Council of Johannesburg to the Free Church Council of England at their recent session at Newcastle. It was a strong expression of opinion in favour of this policy. I contend, therefore, my Lords, that public opinion in the Transvaal is clear and decided on this subject.

I ask your Lordships to consider what are really the issues. There are surely two issues. Are we going in this period of the Christian era to repeat the error we made in respect of the American Colonies 130 years ago? Is the fact that a Colony is not self-governing a sufficient reason for the Parliament of this country to override them in what they consider essential to their interest? Is the policy of Lord Milner to be spoilt at the eleventh hour? As I have already said, it is not the mine-owners that Lord Milner thinks of. It is not the dividends. It is in order that South Africa should become British, that there should be a flow of British tradesmen, labourers, and artisans into South Africa, that Lord Milner adopted this policy. He knows that the indentured Chinaman will be followed by a large number of whites. It would be a heavy responsibility for Parliament to take upon itself to arrest that policy of making South Africa British. The leaders of the attack in this matter are those who from the beginning have opposed Lord Milner and his policy; and I am not going beyond the legitimate bounds of debate, when I say that this question has been seized on by the Opposition as a great Party opportunity. It is as a great Party opportunity that it is being worked on every platform and at every meeting throughout the country. We have been asked to pay attention to those demonstrations, and in view of the manifest unpopularity of the proposal to drop it. My Lords, we are not prepared to make what we consider an issue vital to the welfare of South Africa a pawn in Party politics. We shall go on because our confidence in Lord Milner is unabated. We believe that he has been a great servant of the country in a great crisis. We know that the country has hitherto appreciated his worth and supported his policy, and we believe that, although at the present moment people may misunderstand the motive which underlies his policy, they will eventually see that it was right and will not withhold from him or the Government their approval.

*The LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY : My Lords, I should have preferred to take no part in this debate, having spoken twice already on the subject, but for the pointed appeal made by my noble and learned friend who opened the debate on Friday, and the further appeal made to-night by Lord Carrington. I should like to say, first, before dealing with those appeals, a few words of a more general character. It is usually possible in discussions of this kind, and it is in quite an exceptional degree possible, and even necessary in the present case, to separate questions of fundamental principle from questions of administrative detail. As to the question of administrative detail, I am profoundly sceptical as to how far almost any of your Lordships, without possessing local and personal knowledge of the working of these matters on the spot, are able to judge in a really adequate manner what are the *pros* and *cons* of local questions. There are in this House, no doubt, a few noble Lords who are personally familiar with the questions which are in dispute; but, speaking generally, we are dependent upon such a balance as we can strike between the conflicting opinions set before us very voluminously in the Blue-books.

Having given, perhaps, more time than was consistent with other duties to the study of these Blue-books, I still say that I remain honestly unable to strike a balance satisfactory to myself between the conflicting evidence upon not a few of the detailed points. We are told, for example, that a great deal turns upon the relative advantages of developing the deep level mines or working the outcrop mines more thoroughly. Then there is the question whether this or that work can be done best by white or by native labour; the number of men who may be at work at each stamp; the number of departments of work for which coloured labour is necessary; the question whether the recruiting of native labour has been carried on with diligence and with a real desire to secure labourers to the full or not. The noble Lord succeeded on Friday in extracting with trained forensic skill from the mass of the Blue-book certain statements which appeared to show that there had been no real desire on the part of those recruiting native labour to obtain it to the full. I venture to say that any one who will take at random one hundred pages of that book and go through those parts which deal with that important matter will see how enormously preponderating, at all events, is the evidence in the immediately opposite direction. Then as to the exact restrictions which are necessary with regard to coloured workmen, and the question of how far experience, either at Kimberley or Johannesburg, can be utilised with respect to this yellow labour if it is introduced—for those kinds of questions it seems to me that expert knowledge is not only desirable but absolutely necessary to the formation of any sound opinion; and local opinion—I quite admit it—is not unanimous on any one of them. Yet it is no disrespect to this House to say that we are bound to go by that local opinion rather than by our own in all these questions of administrative detail, which, however, important as they are, and greatly as they affect the issue, are not the real points on which we are asked to express an opinion to-night.

We are asked to do this. We are asked to say, without first-hand knowledge on the spot, that the very plans which Lord Milner and those who are working with him feel to be necessary and right the Government, being responsible in the long run for settling the matter, ought to say must now at the last moment be stopped.

That is what we are asked to do; and I perfectly agree that cases might arise in which it would be the duty of the Government, even at the eleventh hour, to procure the abandonment of some Ordinance or regulation which was locally desired. But if that is to be done by the central Government at home, it must be because the question has ceased to be one of mere expediency and is a matter absolutely of right or wrong. That is exactly where I find the evidence fails me. I am surprised, I admit, that the local authorities, whether civil or religious, should take the view they do in this matter. But they do take it. You may discount the opinion of officials because they are officials. You may discount, though I deeply regret to hear any one do so, the opinion of Lord Milner as a prejudiced man, and you may discount the opinion of the bishops and clergy who have been face to face with this problem as likely to be prejudiced. The noble Earl opposite contrasted with that the opinion expressed by the Free Churches in this country. But is it the Free Churches in this country or the Free Churches in South Africa that we ought to listen to? The noble Earl referred to the resolution passed by the Free Church Council of Johannesburg on this subject; and it seems to me important that we should realise exactly what that body consists of and what it said. The Free Church Council of Johannesburg comprises all the non-Episcopal bodies there. At its general meeting on Friday, 4th March, thirty-three were present, including twelve ministers. The Baptist Church was represented by the chairman of the Baptist Union of South Africa, who voted in favour of the resolution. The resolution was carried by thirty votes against one, two declaring themselves neutral. The resolution was—

> "That, while expressing no opinion on the economic questions involved, this meeting strongly deprecates the (English) Free Church Council's agitation against Chinese labour, and thinks that fuller knowledge will modify its views regarding the conditions of service, which are voluntary and similar to conditions which have long prevailed in South Africa."

I do not refer to that resolution because I attach any exceptional weight to the opinion expressed by the Free Church Council. On the contrary, I should myself, as is natural, attach even more weight to what is felt by members of our own Church. But I mention it because the view of the subject taken by the Free Churches in this country is constantly dwelt upon as a strong argument in favour of those who are untrammelled in these matters being likely to say what is right. I ask again whether Free Churchmen there or here are most likely to know the conditions of the problem before us?

I have tried to state the facts not unfairly. Surely it is true that any one taking these Blue-books as a whole will say that it is clear that if you were able to-morrow to have representative government in the Transvaal it is beyond doubt in which direction the opinion of the public would be shown. That seems to me absolutely indisputable, when you consider, with such impartiality as you can, these Blue-books as a whole. I confess I am surprised that it should be so. I will go further and say that if I were living in the Transvaal I should probably be found in the small minority which objects to the introduction of Chinese labour and regards it as dangerous and inexpedient. I should, even at a very large sacrifice of income for the State, which needs it so badly, be disposed on certain grounds to strain every nerve to enable us to wait a while to see how matters went forward before deciding on so great a change as this. Further, to add to the present racial difficulties which exist in South Africa, a new racial question, by the introduction of the Chinese, strikes me as a perilous and formidable policy to pursue. I feel also that the Transvaal is starting a system which it will be exceedingly difficult to abandon, and which, if it grows to very large dimensions may be exceedingly difficult to restrain within the limits which it is now intended to impose. I further confess that I am not altogether easy as to the working of the safeguards about the moral question which I ventured to bring before your Lordships' House a month ago; but a dilemma necessarily exists between the freedom which allows the immigrant to be a source of mischief and the restraint which may go further than Englishmen like. Most of all, I should be terribly afraid of this introduction of Chinese labour throwing back the industrial development of native life and native energy in the Colonies.

Such is my view and such are my fears; but I am confronted with this fact, that other men as high-minded and as public-spirited as we can be, and who have the overwhelming advantage of detailed local knowledge, take a different view and believe the good will preponderate over the ill. By good, we mean not the good of shareholders in mining companies or of great capitalists, but the good of the country as a whole, promoted by the general prosperity of its inhabitants and the possibility of an adequate Budget to make the Colony run as it ought to run. Those on the spot believe the good will preponderate over the ill. Moreover, the authorities at home, with the terrible responsibility that rests upon them and with their opportunity of weighing colonial feeling all over the world, have deliberately arrived at the same conclusion. I feel that the only thing which would justify me in saying, "Gentlemen, you are all mistaken, the conditions are different from what you suppose, the arrangement will not work out in the manner you suggest," would be a conviction that some great moral principle of absolute right and wrong was at stake, before which every question of expediency, or safeguard, or palliation, or so-called necessity, would vanish into air.

That brings me to the challenge, or friendly appeal, made to me the other night with regard to words which I used on a former occasion in this House. Two words of mine were quoted, the words "regrettable necessity." Those words did occur in my speech, but they occurred with a context which gives not only a different, but an absolutely contrary, meaning to that which has been put upon them, not perhaps in this House, but certainly outside. These words are quoted in order to represent me as saying that it does not matter whether the thing is right or wrong if it can be said to be necessary for the financial good of the country, and that therefore it must go forward. I never said anything of the kind, and no thought could be more alien to my whole view of this question. Show me that what is now proposed violates any fundamental principle of right and wrong, show me that it has the slightest taint of the slavery that we have heard about to-night—slavery meaning, I suppose, the compulsory enforcement of one man's unpaid labour for another man's good—show me that it involves cruelty to the labourer who is imported, show me that the labourer is fraudulently enlisted under conditions which he does not understand, show me that it clearly brings about or implies the encouragement of immorality in the sense in which we ordinarily use the word—show these things, or any one of them, and—I am almost ashamed to say anything so obvious—I should not consider the so-called necessity worth a single moment's consideration. In such a case there could be but one answer given by any honest man—namely, "The thing is wrong, and, please God, it shall not take place." But it is exactly because I fail to find those principles that I fall back upon the position which has been challenged, and almost—in a friendly kind of way—ridiculed by my noble friend Lord Carrington to-night, of leaving the responsibility with those upon whom, as it seems to me, it ought properly to rest. We have heard to-night such expressions as slavery. It does seem to me a pity, to say the least, that a word should be used so capable of leading to utter misunderstanding in the minds of those who are unfamiliar with the conditions of colonial life.

There is one man now in this country who knows this subject from end to end, and has spent many years in working in the compounds among the natives in South Africa, the Bishop of Mashonaland, who is not, on the whole, in favour of the policy of the Government. But with regard to that particular point I am allowed to quote his words. He says—

> "It is absurd and almost a prostitution of language to talk of compounded labour under Government supervision as slavery, or even servility."

Now, I want to say one word more before I sit down. I have been in the last few days the recipient of appeals from many different quarters, including those made to me in this House, that I should, I had almost said, put myself at the head of a movement to resist in the name of liberty, or rather religion, the enactment for which the Transvaal asks. That would be a very easy course to take, and in one sense it might be a very popular course. Nothing is easier than to inflame popular feeling on a matter of this kind. Why? Because you have ready to your hand to use—may we not say to trade upon?—one of the noblest and most sacred instincts which God has implanted in the minds of the English race—the love of liberty and the hatred of anything like slavery. It is a perilous thing and it may easily be a grossly unfair thing to trade upon that feeling unless you take care to tell those to whom you are speaking the whole story. When you know the quick and generous response which will follow if you touch upon that string you ought to be careful lest you debase and degrade the power of using that sacred appeal by lowering it to a very different use from the high aim which the words seem to imply. To take something that is very sacred and utilise it for lower purposes for a Party end is to debase and degrade it. I am not accusing Members of your Lordships' House of doing so; but everyone, I think, will admit that that is being done up and down the country to-day. The temptation to it is necessarily strong. You can go, with your knowledge of the bewildering problems which always exist where a civilised race is in touch with an uncivilised race, to people who know nothing of that problem, and, by harping upon that string of liberty, evoke a cheer which is really due to the ignorance of the men to whom you speak. Yet the cheer is one for which we are thankful. God forbid that that impulse and instinct should ever grow weak among our people.

The temptation to appeal to it is a real one. No body of men, no political Party, I think, is free from it. Four years ago I ventured to think that the best instincts of patriotism were in many an English town and village misused in similar ways. In the course of our long war, feelings were now and then inflamed to fever heat among people who understood neither the horror of war nor the sacred responsibility of Imperial trust. I am anxious lest that peril be incurred again now in the name of liberty. What I am asked to do, if I understand rightly, is to bring religion into the question and to say that religion calls upon us to resist the proposals that have been made. Religion is to be brought in to help an argument which might, however, unconsciously, be deeply coloured by quite other objects than regard for our Imperial trust. Feeling as I do about this proposal—I could not have voted for it if I had been in the Transvaal—I cannot vote for it now. I called attention a month ago to some of the dangers which attend it. But no adequate reason, as it seems to me, has been shown for calling on the Government now to override the opinions of those who from local knowledge, or from the wide range of their general experience, are qualified to weigh either the gains or the perils of the policy. If you believe that there is involved in this Ordinance a violation of the fundamental principles of right and wrong you must, as it seems to me, repeal in a similar way every Ordinance in other Colonies which makes arrangements for indentured labour. Nobody, so far as I know, proposes to do that, and now that we have secured the amply detailed provisions and safeguards which the regulations appended to this Ordinance contain, I am content, although I confess it is with no small measure of anxiety of heart, to leave the responsibility with those into whose hands the country has entrusted it.

*LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY: My Lords, I hope that I shall not incur the censure of making imputations or ascribing motives. The debate began with some animadversions with regard to that, and we have been freely taken to task by nearly all the speakers on the other side. Even the most rev. Primate suggested that in this controversy there was a tendency to trade on the noblest feelings of the English race. The noble Earl the First Lord of the Admiralty also concluded his speech by saying that he was not going beyond the proper limits of debate when he said that this question had been seized upon by the Leaders of the Opposition merely for the purpose of attacking Lord Milner and as a great Party opportunity. I do not approach the subject in any such spirit, but I do wish to plead for some mitigation, at any rate, of what I think is a proposal involving not merely grave moral dangers but the certainty of grave moral mischief. The noble Duke the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, was kind enough in his speech on Friday night to frankly admit that the criticism which had been directed against this Ordinance had been of great help to the Government in enabling them very materially to modify the conditions of, and to improve, the regulations. While we do not wish to impute motives, I think we ought also to appeal against being overborne by testimonials to character. What we are concerned with is the operation of this Ordinance as a mere naked matter of fact. Noble Lords on the opposite side may credit Lord Milner with the most glorious patriotism and heroic purposes, but, if the Ordinance is bad, that will not alter its character. The noble Lord made an impassioned appeal to us not, at the eleventh hour, to ruin the magnificent Imperial work of Lord Milner, but I say that these arguments are as irrelevant to the merits of this Ordinance as might be any disparagement of the personal character or public spirit of Lord Milner. We are here to examine the Ordinance as such. The noble Earl read out the conditions inserted recently in the regulations with reference to the importation of women with the Chinamen. Might I say that in this as in several other modifications of the Ordinance I recognise the activity and the honourable purpose of Mr. Lyttelton rather than the spontaneous action of the Governor of the Transvaal. Anyone who takes the trouble to read the various telegrams and Papers will see that constant pressure has been brought from home, and that the Ordinance and the regulations under it have been gradually modified in obedience to that pressure. As an illustration of this, I would point to the fact that in the first instance, if the Chinaman did not bring his wife with him, but desired that she should follow him, he had to bear the expense of her importation; but Mr. Lyttelton insisted that the cost of conveying her to South Africa should be borne by the employer. The noble Earl, the First Lord of the Admiralty, quoted the regulation which provides that the Chinaman may claim

Lord Stanley of Alderley.

to be accompanied by his wife, but is it at all likely that the recruiting agent will take men who wish to bring their wives with them if he can find others who are willing to go alone, especially as the taking of wives and families will increase the cost to the importer without enhancing the efficiency of the labour? If there is this eager desire on the part of many of the poor coolies of the Chinese towns to go to South Africa, is it not obvious, if the conditions are fairly attractive from the money point of view, that plenty of men will be found ready to go unaccompanied by their wives? I therefore say that it is one thing to place in an Ordinance the obligation to bring a reasonable proportion of women and another to have the sort of voluntary contract between the importer and the coolie which exists in this case. It is obvious that the men who will have the preference will be those who do not desire to take their wives.

I wish to enter a protest against the attempt which Lord Selborne made to place noble Lords on this side in a dilemma when he said that either we must say that the Chinaman is a person of such infamous character that he ought not to be allowed in at all, or that we ought to be content to let him in. I have not the slightest doubt that the Chinese, like all people of the human race, have mixed qualities. But I would point out that you cannot take a large number of men from any community, and place them in close confinement, without the natural accompaniment of women without necessarily leading to the very gravest moral results, and I feel sure, from the remarks of the most rev. Primate that though he was not able to bring his theoretical opinion to the practical conclusion of a vote, yet that is borne in upon his mind as strongly as it is upon ours. I say, therefore, that the healthy state of a large community of people is one in which the sexes are reasonably balanced. It was pointed out on Friday that the conditions of the confinement of the Chinese would be such that it would be impossible that there could be any offspring of a mixed race. Chinamen, when they leave China and go to places where they are free to move about, do contract mixed marriages, and there are consequently children of mixed race. I do think that a state of things in which the only women who will have access to these Chinamen will be the few wives who may be brought over from China must lead to very serious consequences. I should like to touch upon another point which the First Lord of the Admiralty thought he made against the Opposition. I cannot at all admit the construction he put on Lord Spencer's speech last Friday. The noble Earl the Leader of the Opposition did not infer that he would be glad to see South Africa flooded with Chinamen if only they came in free.

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE: I did not say Lord Spencer said he would be glad to see it. I said he did not base any objection on principle to it.

*LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY: I dissent as entirely from that construction of what Lord Spencer said as from the other. What I understood him to say was that it was one question as to the limits and the range of immigration into a country under free conditions, and quite another thing whether it was right to introduce people into the country unde what I must call servile or semi-servile conditions; and I utterly repudiate the idea that those who are criticising the action of the Government in your Lordships' House to-night are to be gibbeted before the country as wanting to inundate South Africa with cheap yellow labour provided it is allowed to come in on open terms. That is not the question before us, and it is not the alternative. Speaking for myself, I do not mind defining my own position in the matter. I hold that after our great expenditure of blood and money in South Africa, we are quite entitled to say that our population there shall not be so diluted with an entirely different race of a different civilisation, as to make the country unsuitable for the further expansion of the British race; but the immigration of 150,000 Chinese under servile conditions would be a much greater evil to the Colony than the immigration of 10,000 or 20,000 under free conditions. I am pleading with the Government rather like a person who has had the Second Reading of a Bill to which he objects carried but is striving to amend it in Committee. I will concede that we have little hope of setting the Ordinance aside. I will grant you that every Chinaman who goes into South Africa is ultimately to be shipped back to China. I say that you err against the principles of freedom and morality when you say that human beings shall be brought into your country and prohibited from making the best use of their talents. That is the bribe to the white population to mitigate their dislike to competition from the Chinaman.

This Ordinance to my mind gives a horrible standard of relative criminality. If a mine-owner should be so minded as to employ as engine driver a Chinaman who has been imported as a stoker he is subjected to a fine of £500 or a term of six months imprisonment. If, on the other hand, the employer should resist the officers in visiting the mines to see that the conditions of the Ordinance are carried out, he may for that offence be fined £50 or be sentenced to a term of two months imprisonment. The grotesque disproportion between the punishments shows an utterly perverted idea of the claims of labour and of justice. You might have transplanted your Chinamen at the end of the three years without subjecting them to all these conditions. You might have guaranteed to them a certain amount of going forth and not left it to the mere caprice of the employer. It is because throughout this question the modifications made in the Ordinance have been forced on the Government by public opinion that I feel there is lacking that guarantee of good faith and sincerity that would have been desirable. The most rev. Primate referred to the opinion of the Free Churches in the Colony, which he preferred to the opinion of the Free Churches in England, but I would wish to remind him and other Members of this House of the history of the churches in the United States at the time leading up to the great war which established freedom in America. At that time the unanimous voice not only of the laymen but of the churches in the South, was all for slavery. One bishop actually wrote a book to prove that the Bible sanctioned American slavery; and the Free Churches—the Baptist Churches and the Wesleyan Churches—were all split between North and South. A strong material sentiment of gain taints even those who, as leaders of religious thought, ought to point men to more spiritual ideas, and to appeal to a community where the gold-producing industry is dominant, and to say that when the Free Churches there are swept along by the pressure of the opinion promoted and inspired by the capitalists of the Rand have a suffrage more valuable than that of those who are able to give free scope to their views without being ostracised by the opinion of the district, does not seem to me a wise or just view to take.

Sitting suspended till Nine o'clock.

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*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Lord WINDSOR): I should like to begin the observations I have to make by quoting what Lord Milner said in a despatch with regard to the discussion which took place in the Legislative Council of Johannesburg. He said—

> "I never remember a discussion in which the weight of argument was more completely on one side."

No, my Lords, there may be a question in the minds of some noble Lords here upon which side the weight of argument in this discussion that we have had to-night rests, but I must say that I should be less than candid if I did not re-echo Lord Milner's words on this occasion, and say that, in my opinion, the weight of argument rests entirely with the policy which His Majesty's Government have at the present crisis adopted. The Motion that is before the House, which has been moved by the noble and learned Lord opposite, Lord Coleridge, is to the effect—

> "That this House disapproves of the importation of Chinese labourers into the Transvaal under the recent Ordinance until the grant to that country of full representative government."

If the Motion means anything it means that had the Transvaal been a self-governing Colony at this moment no interference on the part of the British Parliament would have been asked for. I must confess that the noble and learned Lord went further than that, because he denied the impossibility of getting sufficient black labour in South Africa, and he said that the efforts which had been made by the managers of the mines were not genuine efforts, and that they had in view the possibility of Chinese cheap labour. Now, my Lords, I think that contention was really disposed of by the noble Lord, Lord Grey, who spoke from below the Gangway, when he pointed out that over £400,000 had been spent by the managers of the mines in endeavouring to obtain Kaffir labour from Portuguese territory and elsewhere, but there is this further reason, which has been touched upon, I think, by Lord Camperdown this evening, and it is this—that it seems to me really absurd to contend that the managers of the mines have not made a genuine effort to supply the deficiencies in the labour market, which I think are generally admitted. Chinese cheap labour may very well be talked about when you are comparing it with white labour, but when you are comparing it with Kaffir labour it is impossible to call it cheap, considering the double journey of the Chinamen, and the wages which are to be paid; and taking them together, the cost of Chinamen is certainly considerably in excess of the cost of using Kaffir labour, if you could get it. Now what the actual figures as to the cost of importing Chinese labour are I am not prepared to say, because I readily admit that I have received different figures upon this point, but I think I may take it that the last figures which have been given to me may be accepted as correct, and they show that, the cost of the Chinamen as compared with the Kaffirs will be at least ten shillings per month per head greater. I think I am putting it as low as I possibly can, and I believe that that, at least, will be the extra cost of employing Chinese labour as compared with Kaffir labour. It seems to me that it is impossible really to argue—whatever may have been the particular circumstances of the evidence which Lord Coleridge read from the Blue-book, pointing to the suggestion that it was not necessary to take too much trouble to get the Kaffirs—that, after all, if we consider the self-interest of the mine-owners alone we may feel pretty certain that they would not go out of their way to spend very nearly half-a-million of money in endeavouring, without a genuine intention of taking the full advantage of it, to obtain Kaffir labour, when it must necessarily cost them a considerable amount more if they employ Chinese labour.

I do not think it is necessary for me now to endeavour to prove to the House that there is a shortage of labour. This point has been referred to constantly, and my noble friend the First Lord of the Admiralty took the same line, and said he would consider that that fact was practically admitted; but there is one point which I do not think has been stated in this House during the course of this debate, and it is that the shortage of labour, which is admitted in the mines, is not confined to the Rand district, because there is a shortage of labour in the agricultural districts of a very serious kind, which has to be considered in respect of the whole labour question. May I remind the House that a letter was sent to the Transvaal Labour Commission from Krugersdorp, and it was read there, and the essence of it was this. They said—

> "On account of the large number of labourers required in the Transvaal since the war, labour is almost unobtainable by us, except at prohibitive rates. If the mines, which can afford to pay a higher rate of wages to the natives, are unable to obtain sufficient labour, it is evident that the prospect of the agriculturist is very discouraging."

and then they go on to say—

> "Under the circumstances and taking into consideration the gravity of the situation, we, the undersigned, request that your Commission may lose no time, but immediately lay your scheme before the Government, by which the agriculturist as well as the mines may be supplied with sufficient labour."

There is a further paragraph in the letter which has, I think, been referred to by Lord Camperdown. Their alternative to Chinese labour was that the Kaffir should be, by certain alterations of the law and regulations, compelled to work, but I do not believe, and I do not suggest for a moment, that that proposal is put forward by noble Lords opposite as an alternative to the present Ordinance. I only quote this because I think it has been a little lost sight of in the discussion that has been carried on in this House, that the question of labour in the Transvaal is not by any means confined to the shortage of labour in the mines, but there is a shortage of labour in all industries, and this shortage is certainly not the least in the agricultural districts. Therefore, if you adopted the plan and the policy which has been urged —I do not say in this House, but it has constantly been urged out of it—that the mine-owners ought to pay a higher rate of wages in order to induce the Kaffirs to work in the mines, you would, without doubt, make the condition of the agricultural districts very much more grave as regards this shortage of labour than they are now. Well, my Lords, assuming as I do, and it has been assumed in this House to-night, that it is admitted there is a shortage of labour, the question which remains is whether the importation of indentured Chinese labour is in itself so wrong that this moral consideration should outweigh all other considerations, and should outweigh all the advantages to be gained by employing these Chinese. It has been said that we cannot get at the true opinion of the Colony in this matter in the absence of representative government. I wish to say a word or two upon this point. What is really the case? What is the total amount of adult white male population in South Africa? I am informed it may be taken at 80,000.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN: In the Transvaal.

*Lord WINDSOR: Yes, not in South Africa, but in the Transvaal, and this total does not include the Orange River Colony. A petition has been signed certainly by 45,000 adult males above the age of sixteen years in favour of the importation of Chinese labour, and this petition was presented to the Legislative Council in January of this year. I am informed that there are some 15,000 officials who have not signed this petition, and who are, I suppose, presumably in favour of the policy of the Government. Whether that is so, or not, I do not care, because I can take it either way. If it is preferred that I should eliminate the official element it will merely reduce my total from 80,000 to 65,000 and that would do perfectly well for my argument. You have then either out of the 80,000, over 60,000 who have really declared themselves in favour of Chinese labour, as against 20,000 from whom you have heard nothing, or, if you eliminate the officials, you have 45,000 out of 65,000. That is the opinion which you have already got from the Colony and now a *referendum* is asked for. It has been suggested that we ought to have a *referendum* and obtain a poll of the voters in that way. It has already been explained to the House that a *referendum* takes a very long time, that all the machinery for it has to be started from the beginning, and that no satisfactory result would be obtained from it except after many months of delay, and thereby that much very valuable time would be lost. But supposing the *referendum* was given. I only want to compare it to what you would get at an ordinary election. At the recent Cape elections there were only 62 per cent. of the voters polled. In the case of the Transvaal the total number in favour of the proposal of the Ordinance was far larger than the percentage of votes polled in Cape Colony, not for one side or for one question, but the total votes polled at the general election. It seems to me, my Lords, that it is idle to say that we have no means of knowing what the opinions of the people who comprise the white population of the Transvaal really are, because the large majority have declared themselves in favour of this policy. It seems to me that, if you lay so much stress upon representative government and the opinions of the persons who are constitutionally empowered by popular election to speak for others, you are really running after the shadow when you have the substance within your grasp if you would only see it.

It has been said, and I think it has been said this evening, that we have changed our opinions. I do not think Mr. Chamberlain has been referred to in this House, but he has been referred to in another place as having changed his opinions upon this subject, and the High Commissioner is also said to have changed his opinions upon this question. I readily admit this, but I say that they have changed their opinions on the weight of evidence. Lord Milner says in one of his despatches—

> "That evidence has for some time past been steadily influencing public opinion, but the cumulative effect of it, as brought out in the debate, is overwhelming, and virtually leaves no room for doubt that the choice lies between a prolonged stagnation of industry and agriculture and a resort to imported labour. It is the recognition of this fact alone, which, in my opinion, has transformed public opinion."

That, my Lords, I think is a quite sufficient answer to any statement that opinions have been changed in the Transvaal. I think Lord Camperdown this evening quoted the divisions which had taken place in the Chambers of Commerce, and the change of opinion which they had shown, and he said that a year ago, by a very large majority, they voted against the importation of Chinese labour, whilst at the beginning of this year, by an almost equally large majority, they voted in favour of it. It seems to me really useless for us to bandy about from one side to the other the charge that we do on occasions change our views, but the necessity remains for us to prove that those changes of opinion have taken place because of evidence that cannot be ignored, and unless we can see through that evidence and gauge its weight, we realise that we should be doing a grievous harm to the country, over which we have the responsibility of government. I would, my Lords, ask this question, I would ask the noble Lords opposite, What do you really mean to do if you succeed in defeating the Government on this question, and if you came into office? I presume you would withdraw the sanction that has been given to this Ordinance, and you would disallow it, because I cannot believe that the Opposition are using this question as a mere peg on which to hang a popular attack upon the Government. I cannot believe that noble Lords opposite do not intend, if the power is given them, to make good the professions they have made in this House and act up to them, and oppose practically, as they have said they wished to oppose, the importation of Chinese labour. Therefore, my Lords, I say that while the controversy in this country is raging the fate of the Transvaal and of South Africa hangs in the balance. I honestly believe, assuming that, if noble Lords opposite had their way they would disallow this Ordinance, that by so doing, they would set back the clock in South Africa for many years. I believe, too, that it would be almost impossible, under those conditions, to establish the policy for which we have been striving for years past, that is, the policy of endeavouring to promote the growing prosperity of South Africa under British rule, or at least it would be increasingly difficult to realise it. Therefore, my Lords, I do not think we have gone too far in appealing to the House to support, by a large majority, the policy which has been set very clearly before the House by the Government. It has been laid down not only by the present Colonial Secretary, but by the late Colonial Secretary, that our policy should be—

> "To treat the Transvaal as though it were a self-governing Colony unless a distinct Imperial interest is concerned."

That, my Lords, seems to be the foundation really of our case. The attacks that are made upon the importation of Chinese labour are very diverse. The right rev. Prelate who opened the debate this evening attacked it root and branch, and considered that it was not only immoral, but even un-Christian. Others of your Lordships—and I may mention the noble Earl the Leader of the Opposition, who was here on Friday, and also, I think, the noble Lord who spoke last, Lord Stanley of Alderley—have taken a very different view. Lord Stanley said that the Ordinance was rather in the position of the Committee stage of a Bill; he considered that the Second Reading had passed, and that he was really only attacking that particular regulations of the Ordinance dealing with the conditions under which labour was to be imported. Taking the whole of the attacks which have been made upon the policy of allowing the Ordinance, I take it that the main and principal defence of the Government is this—and it is a principle which it would be rather strange if noble Lords opposite were to oppose—that in matters which affect our Colonies, whether they be actually self-governing or not—the noble Marquess opposite shakes his head, but in face of that expression of dissent I will say that it would be strange indeed if he adopted the principle that, because you are not able at the particular moment to give full self-government to a Colony, you are to clamour for the intervention of the British Parliament in a matter of policy which affects its internal administration of the Colony. The Transvaal is not a self-governing Colony at this moment but the policy of the Government is to treat it in all matters affecting the internal administration of that Colony as far as possible as if it were, and not to interfere and arouse those feelings of opposition which any colony would naturally feel if affairs affecting particularly their own administration were interfered with and obstructed by the British Parliament.

I will not detain your Lordships any longer, and, in conclusion, I only wish to say that it is really on these grounds that the Government have not disallowed the Ordinance. They believe that this Ordinance itself, and the regulations under it, will meet any objections which may be raised in regard to the introduction of Chinese labour into the Transvaal so far as the white population of the Transvaal is concerned. The Government believe that it would be a most dangerous principle, and one which might lead to very grave difficulties in the future government of South Africa, if they departed from this principle because a majority, at this moment, of the English people, for reasons which I venture to say are not based upon a real knowledge of the case but upon feelings of sentiment which none of us will make light of, are opposed to it. We believe that it would be a dangerous thing if the British Parliament interfered with the internal affairs of the Colony of the Transvaal, and we shall still maintain the principle that where Imperial interests are not concerned we shall endeavour to govern the Transvaal as if it were a self-governing Colony.

THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY: I hope I shall be excused if I intervene for a few moments in this debate. I do not often trouble your Lordships, and the remarks I shall make to-night will be of the briefest possible description. I belong to, and have lately come from, a constituency which is slowly recovering from the effects of a by-electoral campaign. In the East Dorset election the policy of His Majesty's Government, and the cause which we who sit on this side of the House have so much at heart, suffered, I regret to say, a somewhat severe defeat. Noble Lords opposite, I notice, smile at that remark, and they have every right to be pleased with the victory secured for the principles they represent, but I am sure they will forgive me if I venture to point out to them that too often in history, or in military history at any rate, that which has been looked upon as a glorious victory has very often been turned into a crushing and lasting defeat. But, my Lords, I agree that the question of the importation of Chinese labour into the Transvaal played a very important and prominent part in the election in East Dorset, and I think I understood the right rev. Prelate the Lord Bishop of Hereford to say that the Dorset labourer might prove a better adviser to His Majesty's Government on the question of the importation of Chinese labour than Lord Milner himself.

THE LORD BISHOP OF HEREFORD: I said a safer adviser.

THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY: Well, my Lords, if a series of woeful and serious misrepresentations can be sufficient priming for the Dorset labourer to perform the duties which the right rev. Prelate wishes him to do, all I can say is that during that election he got plenty of it. I know, my Lords, full well that during the heat and turmoil of an election it is almost impossible and really futile to attempt to refute or to counteract and gainsay all the misrepresentations of facts which take place during the contest; and, as far as Members of this House are concerned, they are prohibited from opening their lips on such an occasion, and they cannot play too prominent a part in a constituency during an election. But in the calmer and more serene atmosphere of your Lordships' House, and during a debate such as this, then is our chance, nay it is our duty, to do what we can to dispel and refute the erroneous criticisms which have been the medium of so much misrepresentation. During the election to which I have referred the term "Chinese slavery" was freely used, and it was ruthlessly bandied about in every part of the constituency of East Dorset just as it has been bandied about in every part of the country. In the height of the turmoil of the campaign such terms were used, but I must confess I was surprised when I came down to your Lordships' House to hear that expression used in all seriousness. I submit that the term "Chinese slavery" is a term that cannot properly be applied to the policy of the Government. During the time I was in Australia, when I had the honour of serving in the suite of the noble Lord, who I am sorry to see is not in his place opposite, Lord Brassey, I had an opportunity of visiting the greater portion of North Queensland and seeing on the sugar plantations there Kanaka labourers, otherwise South Sea Islanders, working, they having been imported and indentured for three years. They were sent to work on these plantations for two reasons; first, because of the scarcity of white labour in the country and of work which it would not do; and, secondly, because the climate of the country prohibited white men from working at all. These men are properly paid and fed for three years, after which they are free to return to their native country or sign on for another three years, which a good many of them do. It is, however, only fair to tell your Lordships that I was told that that was because when some of them returned to the South Sea Islands they were cooked, served up, and eaten by the natives, which fact may be alleged as a reason for these men preferring to remain in safer surroundings. To the conditions under which they served the term slavery could in no sense be applied. I noticed a reference by the noble Lord opposite to what has already been pointed out by the First Lord of the Admiralty. He does not question so much the principle of importing Chinese labour into the Transvaal, but rather the propriety of importing labour until there is a grant of authority by a free and representative Government. My Lords, procrastination is the thief of time, and a lack of activity in industrial enterprise and the prolonged stagnation of the mining industry now may result in permanent hurt to the country, and may be a future hindrance to the development of the South African race. As the noble Lord the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies stated on Friday night that the members of the Legislative Council of the Transvaal had asked for it; that representative deputations had waited on Lord Milner in support of it; that the Bishop of Pretoria and all the members of the Free Church Council had expressed their approval of it; under those circumstances, in my humble opinion, as this Resolution may mean further postponement and a further period of waiting which may be harmful to South Africa, I have nothing else to do but to give my vote against it.

*LORD MONKSWELL: My Lords, I am very sorry that the noble Lord who has just sat down should have imported the term "wilful misrepresentation" into what took place in the contest in East Dorset.

THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY: I am sorry if I said wilful, I did not intend to say that; I intended to say woeful.

*LORD MONKSWELL: Whether there was any woeful misrepresentation at the East Dorset election I cannot say, but, if so, I do not think it was on one side only. Now, my Lords, the noble Earl has told your Lordships that there is a precedent in the Kanaka proceedings for the importation of Chinese labourers in South Africa. I scarcely think that is in favour of the importation of the Chinese. I think the noble Earl is somewhat disingenuous when he suggests that the Legislative Council is a body representative of the people of the Transvaal. I do not think he will get much agreement upon that point from persons knowing the Colonies, because it is perfectly clear that on the Legislative Council there must be an enormous number of officials who must vote in a certain way, and it is therefore, my Lords, I think impossible to say that such a council is representative of the people of the country.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Duke of MARLBOROUGH): In this case they were told to vote in accordance with their consciences, and not in accordance with the views of Lord Milner.

*LORD MONKSWELL: Lord Windsor will not expect me, I am sure, to agree with him when he says the whole weight of the argument is with this Ordinance, and he will hardly expect me to agree with him as to the terrible consequences of the result of refusing to pass this Ordinance. The noble Lord says the people of South Africa must be in favour of this Ordinance because of the petitions that have been signed, but does not the noble Lord see there is a restraint in an open petition by which the people must necessarily be influenced, and it is not in the least extent a true indication of the views of the persons who are under the influence of the mine-owners, and who are not likely not to sign the petition. There is the greatest difference in the world between voting upon an open petition and voting by ballot. My Lords, I entirely deny that it is "beyond doubt" that if the Transvaal had representative Government that that Government would have passed the Ordinance. I do not agree with the most rev. Primate that this is so, but, whether it is so or not, while the Transvaal remains a Crown colony, it is the Imperial Government and the Imperial Government alone who are responsible for this Ordinance. We make this country a Crown colony, because it is not ripe for any other kind of Government, and while it is a Crown colony the whole responsibility must rest on the Government, and moreover, even if it is granted that a majority is in favour of the Ordinance, it is shown that in Cape Town there is a majority against it, and on the authority of Lord Milner himself, South Africa is one and indivisible, and, therefore, must be taken as a whole. Now, my Lords, I come to the observations of the First Lord of the Admiralty. The noble Earl says if this Chinese immigration is unholy and vile we should not consent to it. Those persons who support this Ordinance have supported it with very different voices. In this case we have the noble Duke and the noble Earl specially concerned with such matters, who is not in his place, and they say the Ordinance is a very proper thing, but that is not the attitude taken up by Lord Goschen or Lord Camperdown, or by the Legislative Council of the Transvaal, because the Legislative Council of the Transvaal was very apologetic, and recognised that it was only dire necessity which would justify such an Ordinance.

A NOBLE DUKE: Hear, hear!

*LORD MONKSWELL: I am glad to hear that the noble Duke is of that opinion, because he spoke on this matter in so cheerful a way the other day, that I should not have thought he would have taken that view. Lord Grey has threatened us that if this Ordinance is defeated the Transvaal will be bankrupt. Surely it is absolutely impossible that under such a condition the Transvaal should become bankrupt, while the mines, even under the present conditions of labour, are paying a dividend of £5,500,000 a year. It is surely ridiculous, my Lords, to talk of the Transvaal becoming bankrupt under those circumstances. The only chance of the Transvaal becoming bankrupt is by the mines being worked out. And the greater the number of Chinese you import, the greater the chance of the mines being worked out, and the sooner the Transvaal will become bankrupt. The noble Earl also said if we oppose this Ordinance we must give the Transvaal some subsidy. Now, my Lords, I say in one respect this war was a miners' war. I do not say it was a miners' war in the sense that Mr. Chamberlain says so, but I say to this extent it is acknowledged to be a miners' war, that if there had been no mines there would have been no war. My Lords, I think that being so, and we having spent, practically for the benefit of these mines, £250,000,000 and 25,000 lives, we have a right to ask, and the country will certainly ask, that the Transvaal, under the circumstances, shall pay the £30,000,000 they promised to pay.

My Lords, there are many dangers that beset Chinese labour in South Africa. One was mentioned by Lord Coleridge, that was the great danger of a Kaffir rising. My Lords, a Kaffir rising would be a most serious thing. That is not denied by anybody, and least of all was it denied by the majority of the Labour Commission, because in the Majority Report it lays the greatest stress upon the necessity of maintaining good relations with the Kaffirs, and the Report refused to consider, and very properly, certain suggestions made by General Botha and others for either directly or indirectly coercing the Kaffirs to work. They rightly considered that there were other things which were even more important than a full supply of Kaffir labour. I will quote the words of the Majority Report—

> "The existing relationship between the white and the black races are more important than a full supply of African labour for local industries."

My Lords, the whole object of bringing in Chinese labour is to beat down the price of Kaffir labour. That is not denied. Throughout the whole of these Blue-books there is one special complaint, which is that the Kaffir's wages are too high, and the suggestion that they ought to be made lower. That was fully stated in the Legislative Council, and I think Lord Windsor said that it was the great object to get cheap labour.

*LORD WINDSOR: What I said was that if you raised the price of Kaffir labour at the mines you made it so much more difficult for the agricultural population to get their labour.

*LORD MONKSWELL: Quite so, and the persons who want the Chinese labour want it for the purpose of beating down Kaffir labour.

*LORD WINDSOR: No, no!

*LORD MONKSWELL: Then, my Lords, I would suggest an alteration in the Ordinance, because the Ordinance does not put any limit upon the wages that a Chinaman may be asked to accept. And if he is in the habit of getting a penny a day, and he is to get six or seven times the wage he gets in his own country, he may get sevenpence a day, which is far below what the Kaffir now gets.

Then as to white labour. The most elaborate provisions have been put into this Ordinance to prevent white labour suffering from this competition, but no protection has been put in for the Kaffirs, and they have a right to complain of their interests being neglected, and of this Chinese labour, which is paid perhaps only a half or quarter what the Kaffir gets. Your Lordships must also remember this, that the Kaffirs of late have had an object lesson not only as to wages but of conditions of labour. Before the war, when there was no scarcity of labour, the conditions of labour were abominable. Kaffirs were killed and maimed, and there was no compensation; scurvy and chest diseases were rife among them, and they were badly fed and badly housed. My Lords, it may be thought that I have overdrawn the picture, but Sir Godfrey Lagden, the Commissioner for Native Affairs, brings a most comprehensive indictment against the mine-owners—

> "Questions of housing, health, and so forth, were all bad before the war. It had been a common occurrence to buy up the worst truck, and chuck it on the mines for the natives. Scurvy was very prevalent."

My Lords, it is no wonder that the chiefs say—"We do not like our men to go to Johannesburg because they go there to die." But there is more than that. There is some reason to believe that before the war good faith was not kept with the Kaffirs with regard to their labour, because, during the war, it was said before Lord Milner himself that while the Government wage of a Kaffir was fixed at 30s. a month, some Kaffirs were obliged to labour at 17s. a month, and that while they engaged to work only for four months they were obliged to consent to work for six months. My Lords, I trust that that is only an exceptional instance, but whether it is, or not, that was the evidence given before Lord Milner himself, and the Kaffirs said they dared not complain because the country was under martial law. The transformation scene after the war, when scarcity arose, and it was necessary to treat the Kaffirs well was wonderful. Mr. Moses, a mine inspector, says—

> "There was marked advance in general appearance owing to improved and increased diet."

It would seem from that, my Lords, that they not only had had improper but insufficient diet—

> "The conditions of labour were better all round. Scurvy in some compounds was entirely eradicated."

Not only is the condition in the mines better all round but up to two months ago the mine-owners gave no compensation for death or injury sustained to their Kaffirs. Now such is the transformation wrought by the scarcity of labour that compensation is given for death or injury. But there is more to come. Sir Godfrey Lagden says—

> "Many necessary reforms in labour conditions are only partly accomplished."

and all this the Kaffirs will think is due to the scarcity of labour. And things ought to be better than they are because it appears that whereas the death rate in mines is fifty-seven per 1,000, in the case of Kaffirs with occupations in the open air the death rate is only seventeen per 1,000. This blessed change still going on cannot fail to impress the Kaffirs. They have got or are getting good lodging, good food, good pay, and compensation for injury. And all these blessings, in their view, are due to scarcity of Kaffir labour and the increased demand for it. Can anyone doubt that the first batch of Chinamen coming to South Africa will effect a reduction of the wages of the Kaffir?

One noble Lord has been taken to task for speaking of Chinamen living in cages. It strikes me very forcibly that if they are not put into cages and protected there will be very few left in a very short time. The whites are also alarmed, there is a very widespread feeling among the whites that the restrictions put in in order to prevent competition between the white and yellow labourers will break down. The nature of those restrictions has been made less oppressive by liberal criticism and the great difference between the Ordinance now and what it was originally, is that the labourer must consent to the transfer of his labour before it is transferred. That provision must be very carefully watched for the reason that it is not popular with the mine-owners Lord Milner says that this may make the Ordinance of little value, but your Lordships must remember that it was put in originally, struck out at the instance of the mine-owners, and has been put back again at the instance of the British people. Now, my Lords, this is not the only question; there is another, there is the question of Indian labour. The Government of India would not let Indians go under these conditions. They cannot engage in any work outside mines; they cannot have skilled work even in mines; Chinese foremen are not allowed. Now, my Lords, can these restrictions, which are most stringent in their character, be maintained? That is the question being asked throughout South Africa to-day. Mr. Hutchinson says on page 17 of the Blue-book—

> "At the end of the first twelve months there would not probably be a single white man employed under ground."

The First Lord of the Admiralty said the Chinese were capital hands at combination, and they will do the best they can out of it and will wriggle themselves out of their contracts. I agree. A speaker at a great public meeting in the Transvaal said this—

> "There is no nation on this earth which is better at combination or striking than are the Chinamen. Some fine morning we shall wake up and see in our morning papers that a strike of 10,000 Chinamen has taken place. What will be the result of the state of affairs. You cannot imprison them, the jails will not hold them; you cannot starve them because that would be against the laws of humanity. The mining men will rush to Pretoria and say that if these men are sent home they will close down the mines. I say that every man must see that the restrictions will gradually dwindle away."

But assume that the Chinamen do not strike. Suppose they adhere to the terms of their bargain, and suppose the mine-owners do not rush to Pretoria in this way. I think, at all events, it is safe to say that the restriction that no Chinaman is to be the head of his own gang will break down. But suppose that is got over and a white man is made foreman, another result is bound to take place, as the mine-owners themselves acknowledge. I take the evidence of Mr. Fricker of the Simmer and Jack mines—

> "I gladly acknowledge that the unskilled white labour, which lately has been, and to some extent is now being, employed on the Rand has been of the very greatest use in supplementing the meagre supply of natives now allotted to the mines, but I cannot conceive that anyone who knows the condition of affairs here can, or will, seriously advocate the introduction of white labour in the mines so long as cheap native labour can be secured."

and Mr. Webber, of the Rand mines, says—

> "The continuation of the policy of employing unskilled white labour would not be justified when an adequate native labour force was obtainable."

Therefore you have it on the authority of the mine-owners themselves that the first thing they will do when the Chinamen come is to get rid of all the unskilled white labour on the mines.

There is one other matter to which reference ought to be made, and that is the New Zealand protest. In that they say that, if the Chinaman is allowed to come, vested interests will be created and it will be difficult to go back. That seems to be a serious matter. I want to say one word as to what is

Lord Monkswell.

the great necessity of this Ordinance which is so full of danger. It is said to be necessary in order to work the mines to the fullest extent, and no doubt that is quite a good thing for the shareholders, but I doubt whether, though the speedy exhaustion of the mines is good for the shareholders, it is to the advantage of the Transvaal that its great industry should be worked out in twenty years. I doubt if it is good for South Africa as a whole, or for the world, inasmuch as it might impair the stability of the gold standard. I ask your Lordships why all this feverish haste to make Johannesburg a desert at the earliest possible moment?

*THE MARQUESS OF WINCHESTER: In addressing your Lordships' House for the first time, I wish to associate myself most warmly in the expressions of regret that have been made to the tone adopted by the right rev. Prelate who opened the debate this afternoon. I cannot help feeling that his statements will be read by a good many, and that it will not conduce to the popularity of the Church in the Transvaal. My apology for addressing your Lordships on this subject is that I have spent some years of my life amidst the mining industry in South Africa, and I assure your Lordships it is not a question of whether the white man can work with the Kaffir—the question is whether his constitution and capabilities enable him to find work in that climate under the severe conditions of deep-level mining in South Africa possible. The conditions under which a mine is carried on 1,100 or 1,200 feet underground are not very comfortable when on the surface the thermometer stands at 98° in the shade. Imagine a white man going to work in the atmosphere of the mines at 10s. a day, when his fellow-working man, carpenters, bricklayers, and the like, are being paid 25s. or 30s. a day on the surface. It is impossible to reconcile those two facts. The speech of the noble Lord, to which we have just listened, was a very ingenious one; the noble Lord quoted figures from Blue-books stating the conditions under which the Kaffir laboured before the war, and said the Kaffir's condition before the war was eminently unsatisfactory. I was glad to hear from the noble Lord that the condition of the Kaffir now was very much better. I think, however, the noble Lord will agree with me that the one reason why the condition of the Kaffir is very much better is because he is not allowed to buy drink. Previous to the war the traffic in drink was a perfect disgrace. The Transvaal Government never tried to control it in any way, and, in fact, many of the high officials of the Transvaal were largely interested in the traffic. But, in spite of the improved conditions and better wages, we know there are many fewer available in numbers than there were before the war. Before the war we had, working in the mines, 103,000, now there are less than 80,000 at work.

Lord Carrington has told your Lordships that the nation is against the employment of Chinese labour. Why? Because they do not understand the conditions, and some Members of your Lordships' House and Members of the other House have not tried to explain the reasons, but have tried to obscure the true issues. I had an opportunity recently of attending a meeting in a constituency when the candidate said to me, "What shall I tell them if I am asked about Chinese labour?" I said, "I think it would be better for you to tell them you are in favour of permitting people in distant countries the management of their own affairs." The question was asked, and he gave the reply I suggested. Subsequently the most rev. Primate the Archbishop has told your Lordships how easy it is to raise the passions of the people by the cry of Liberty and Slavery. My Lords, that answer appealed to the 700 or 800 electors present and stifled those passions. I cannot help feeling that the tone which this debate has taken is in many ways due to the anything but complimentary terms in which the officials interested in the government of the Transvaal have been alluded to. I had the honour to see Lord Milner at work previous to the Bloemfontein Conference, and I can only say if any of your Lordships have any doubts of the notorious and strenuous desires of Lord Milner to do nothing but what is absolutely right, you have mistaken the man. I know well many of the gentlemen associated with him in the Government of the Transvaal, and I have been drawn into this debate simply because I could not listen to the remarks which fell from the noble Lord who spoke last without rising in defence of the Legislative Council, who are guided by the best principles in this matter. I have now given my reasons, as shortly as possible, why it is my intention to support the Government in resisting this Resolution. I am not charged with the defence of the Government, that is in other hands; but I am perfectly certain the Government are prepared to accept the responsibility of this Ordinance, and in doing so they have my heartiest support.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH: I confess that I listened to the speech of the most rev. Primate with some regret and disappointment. The most rev. Primate was at great pains to tell your Lordships how carefully he had scanned all the aspects of this question, how deep had been his research into the numerous Blue-books, and he has told your Lordships that he was filled with apprehension as to the effect these proposals might have on the development of the Transvaal. He had his doubts as to the checks proposed in the Ordinance, and he told your Lordships that had he been in the Transvaal he would probably have been found in a small minority against the Ordinance. I do not myself think the most rev. Primate would find himself in so small a minority but rather in a majority. But I think it is unfortunate that the most rev. Primate, after giving all these reasons and being filled with this patriotism, should come to the conclusion that the only thing for him to do was to abstain from voting. I cannot help thinking that if the most rev. Primate had given full rein to his feelings as a Churchman he would have found himself compelled to vote for the Motion. But I am afraid that the feelings of the politician have overcome the feelings of the Churchman, and that the most rev. Primate is giving the benefit of the doubt to noble Lords opposite. I do not think that is a position which will commend itself to either side. Noble Lords opposite have challenged us to say what our policy would have been. We certainly should not have rushed wildly into a sanction of this Ordinance, and we should not have based our policy on the principle of treating a Crown colony as if it were a self-governing colony, for surely the fundamental constitutional difference between a Crown colony and a self-governing colony is that every act of the Government of the former carries with it the direct responsibility of the home Government. I am not quoting the exact words, but I do not think that anybody will deny that that is a fair representation of the line of argument by which this policy is defended to say that the importation of the indentured Chinese labourer is repugnant to all and is only adopted as an odious necessity.

*THE EARL OF **SELBORNE**: I did not use those words.

* LORD **TWEEDMOUTH**: I am not saying for a moment that the noble Earl did. The hatefulness or odiousness of this policy is, I think, apparent enough. It is apparent even from the way in which my noble friend Earl Grey and others have endeavoured to attach stigma to my noble friend Earl Spencer, by the charge that he was ready to allow the free importation of Chinese into South Africa. If a stigma attaches to one for being ready to allow the importation of free Chinamen into South Africa, what an objectionable thing it must be. I do not think we need go further than the opinions expressed by our self-governing Colonies. Australia is against it; New Zealand is against it. Australia excluded Chinamen altogether from the Colony. The noble Earl said that Canada had not said anything against the importation of Chinese labour, and did not object to it. But Canada has raised the poll tax on the Chinaman introduced into Canada from 100 to 500 dollars. That does not show any great affection for the importation of Chinese labour. In America, the United States have excluded Chinese labour altogether. Cape Colony is against the importation. Natal has been quoted as not objecting to it, but what are the facts? It is quite true that Natal is willing to give permission for the passage of Chinese labourers through Natal, but she has declared her determination to exclude Chinese labour from her own territories by every means in her power. I do not think I need labour the point that the importation of Chinese labour is not a desirable thing, that it is unpleasant, and is not wished for by anybody.

Lord Tweedmouth.

Now I come to the question of the necessity. How recently is it that this dire necessity has arisen? It is very recent indeed. It is but a very little while since everybody was against it. Take the organ which now defends most strongly the importation of Chinese labour into South Africa—*The Times*. It is but a year and a half ago—in August, 1902—that two carefully worked out articles appeared in that journal in which Chinese labour was denounced, and its evils pointed out. I will not quote them at length, but in the second of those articles there occurred this sentence—

> "The special conditions of the native populations in South Africa render the exclusion of the Chinese from that country a matter of the first importance."

If it is a fact that the special conditions of the native population in South Africa rendered the exclusion of the Chinese from that country a matter of the first importance in August, 1902, how can the circumstances have changed to such a degree as to make their introduction a necessity in March, 1904? Let me quote a letter from Lord Milner himself. Lord Milner says—

> "To listen to some of the extreme advocates of Asiatic labour you would think that this place was on the verge of total ruin. What is the real case? The production of gold even now is greater than in 1895 or 1896, when the Transvaal already was, and had been for some time past, the marvel of the world in the matter of gold production."

and so Lord Milner goes on. Then let me quote a single sentence from a speech by Dr. Jameson at Grahamstown on 28th May, 1903, where he said—

> "I feel sure there is sufficient labour in the country to meet all requirements, especially when Uganda and Northern Africa have been tapped."

Then there is a report of Sir Godfrey Lagden, who was Secretary for Native Affairs, in which he says—

> "It may be that there are 5,000,000 natives south of the Zambesi, of which 800,000 might be sturdy men. If every man took his fair turn of labour there can be little doubt that South Africa has sufficient for all purposes."

Let me take one other quotation, this time from the evidence given by Mr.

William Grant before the Labour Commission. Mr. Grant was the Native Labour Commissioner to the Johannesburg Chamber of Mines—

> "Q. 8714. Do you mean to say that, in your opinion, Mr. Grant, if the handling of this question of labour for the mines had been done on different lines we should have been able to have abundant labour?" (Mr. Grant.) "I have no hesitation in saying so—none whatever. I give it to you as my honest conviction. My opinion is this: the outcome to-day, to put it in clear and concise language, is the absolute result of ignorance or design. I go as far as that."

Then there is further evidence to the same effect. I would remind you that the De Beers Mines employ 12,000 natives, that they are going to employ 3,000 more at their new Dutoitspan mine and that they have had no difficulty whatever in obtaining them.

My noble friend Earl Grey said that everything turned on the abundant production of gold, that it was an absolute necessity for the Transvaal that the production of gold should be increased, and that the cause of the depression and the difficulties in the Transvaal was that gold is not produced in sufficient quantities. But is my noble friend justified in saying that the production of gold in the Transvaal is on such a very small scale? I think I can give figures showing that that is not the case. I have a table from a mine-owners' paper giving the Transvaal gold output, and I find that from January, 1902, when it amounted to £298,786 until December, 1903, it went steadily on increasing until it reached £1,215,111, while in January and February of the present year the production amounted to no less than £2,546,572. Therefore, if I do not calculate for any increase at all during the remaining months of this year, but simply multiply the production of the first two months by six, I find that the production of the present year will amount to no less than £14,739,432, or very nearly as much gold as was produced in the year 1899, and only a £1,000,000 less than was produced in the year 1898. That shows, I think, that the production of gold in the Transvaal is not so small as necessarily to be the cause of the depression at present existing. Again, I will quote from a mineowners' newspaper. The profits made by the mines tell exactly the same tale. The *African Review* takes the various groups of mines, puts them together, and gives the average profits. That journal shows that out of the Wernher-Beit group, twenty-three out of twenty-five mines earned profits in October, 1903, ranging from £2,097 in the case of the Jubilee to £31,085 in the case of the Robinson, and of those twenty-five mines fifteen had, on 2nd January, declared dividends of from 5 per cent. of the Nigel to the 188½ per cent. of the Ferreira. The Barnato group of five companies all earned profits in October, and three have declared dividends of 40 per cent. for 1903. Of the Goerz group, five earned a profit in October, and three paid dividends in 1903, of 60, 10, and 47½ per cent. respectively. Of the Albu group of four companies, all earned profits, and two of the four declared dividends for 1903, amounting to 55 per cent. Of the Neumann group of four companies, three earned dividends in October, and one declared a dividend of 13¾ per cent. for the year. The Consolidated Gold Fields group of two companies both earned profits in October, and each paid a dividend for the year, one of 5 per cent. and the other of 25 per cent. The Farrar group is in a better position, its two companies having paid for the year dividends of 50 per cent. and 40 per cent. respectively. That does not look like a great failure in the gold production of the Transvaal.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (The Earl of HARDWICKE): Will the noble Lord give us the capitalised value? When he speaks of 55 per cent., I think the House would like to know what the capitalised value is, because the dividends are paid on the par value.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH: Quite so; it means enormous profits to the owners of original shares. That is the point. It is not our business to consider people who choose to give £8, £9, £10, or £16 for a £1 share. What we have to consider is the return on the par value, not on the fancy value which has often been pushed up by all those devices which are known to the financial world. The fact of the matter is that this depression in the Transvaal is due not to the failure of the production of gold, as noble Lords would have us believe, but to the devastation of war. You have carried on in this country a long and devastating war which you fought to a finish. It was not a war in regard to which you went into a country to obtain certain ends, and then having obtained those ends retired from the country. You fought to a finish and became the possessors of the country, and—I am not saying a word against the methods by which the war was carried on—that process necessarily involved the devastation of the country, the destruction of wealth, and the loss of an enormous number of lives. That process went on for three years. How can you expect a country which has just passed through such a devastating experience as that to spring up at once into prosperity? You must expect this depression. Again, I am not calling the methods into question, but you determined your policy to be the right policy, and, having determined that, you should be prepared to act up to your policy and to pay for the results of it.

The absolute necessity for the importation of Chinese labour does not seem to me to have been sufficiently established I think I can claim that at any rate there has been on the other side as much exaggeration of the necessity as on the part of some of my noble friends there has perhaps been exaggeration of the amount of slavery necessarily involved. I will be perfectly frank, and say at once that you can have indentured labour under an Ordinance which does not partake of slavery. The question is, does this Ordinance come up to that standard? Is this an Ordinance which can be put into force without necessarily carrying with it the concomitant of slavery? The White Paper which has been so much quoted to-night is proof in itself that much has been done to free the Ordinance from the objections raised against it in the first instance. I admit that the Government have immensely improved the Ordinance. The noble Duke told us the other day that our efforts on this side of the House deserved credit, and that they had been the means of causing modifications which otherwise would not have been effected. [" No."] I am in the recollection of the House. The noble Duke congratulated us on the success of our efforts, and I think that that success ought to encourage us to redouble our exertions. I say without hesitation that the Ordinance when first produced did involve slavery. It has been greatly mitigated, but there still exist in the Ordinance the seeds of slavery. The favourite argument in its favour has been that in many parts of the Empire indentured labour under ordinance exists. My noble friend Lord Stanmore exploded that argument so far as indentures in Trinidad were concerned. I have taken the trouble to look up the Jamaica Ordinance. I will give your Lordships the results of my inquiries, and it will then be seen how different is the Jamaica Ordinance from the Transvaal Ordinance. The noble Earl Lord Selborne tried to convey the idea that the West Indian Ordinances were all on the same footing as the Transvaal Ordinance. They are nothing of the kind. There are four great points of difference between the Transvaal Ordinance and the Jamaica Ordinance. I find that whilst a Chinaman in the Transvaal may not live anywhere but upon the premises of his employer, that he must not at any time be found more than a mile away without permission, and that that permission is in no case to exceed forty-eight hours, in Jamaica there are no such restrictions. The indentured coolie in Jamaica, outside of work hours, and on Sundays and holidays, is free to go where he pleases. Secondly, whilst Chinamen in the Transvaal may be employed only on unskilled mining labour, and may not, either directly or indirectly, hold property, or enter into any kind of business or trade—surely that is an extraordinary restriction on the ordinary rights of a free man—in Jamaica the indentured coolie is not restricted to unskilled labour, nor is he forbidden to hold property or to engage in trade, except that he may not have a licence for the sale of provisions or spirits. Thirdly, under the Transvaal Ordinance, on the expiration of the contract, the Chinese labourer, with his wife and family, if they be of the same race, willing or unwilling, must be sent back to their country of origin; in Jamaica, on the expiry of the contract, a coolie may either return to India or receive ten acres of land or accept cash in lieu of passage money, and, as a matter of fact, 70 or 80 per cent. of the immigrants in the West Indies remain as cultivators or traders in the islands of their adoption. But one of the worst features of the Transvaal Ordinance is that dealing with the wives and families of the labourers. These, if of the same race, must be introduced under, as far as practicable, the same conditions and restrictions as the men. Therefore, the Chinawomen are prohibited from all remunerative employment except that of unskilled labour in connection with the mines. Moreover, as the importer has to pay the expense of transport both to and from the country of origin, it is not likely that many women will be brought over. In the West Indies the labour of the women is just as useful as that of the men: they come over with their husbands, and in that way I am sure that much immorality is avoided.

Then, my Lords, I come to the point which I raised when the noble Earl was speaking. In these West Indian indentures there is a minimum wage fixed. The noble Earl thought it a small matter that in the Transvaal Ordinance a minimum wage should not have been fixed. At the present moment, as far as I can see, under the Ordinance the contractor in China can get a man to contract, at any rate he can force upon him under any pretension whatever. I ask whoever may follow me to give a distinct answer on this point. Surely it is a reasonable thing to ask that you should fix in the Ordinance the minimum wage to be given to any Chinaman who comes from China to South Africa. You could give as much more as you liked if it became necessary, but surely a minimum ought to be fixed by the Government.

I come now to a contention which has often been put forward, viz., that the more Chinamen you employ the more white men you will require. I should like to have some definite proof of that. Hitherto, we have had no proof whatever. The contention of the mine-owners is that one white man is required for every ten coloured men. At present there are in the mines, roughly speaking —I do not bind myself to a few one way or the other—70,000 Kaffirs and 13,500 white men. That is very much in excess of what the mine-owners think is the proper proportion of white men to be employed in the mines. Therefore, you will have to introduce into South Africa 65,000 Chinamen to add to the 70,000 Kaffirs in order to bring up the number of coloured men in the mines to 135,000, to balance the 13,500 white men. I do not think that for the Chinamen employed in the mines you will require the same number of white men as are necessary with Kaffirs. In the first place, the Kaffir is a spasmodic worker; he comes from time to time, he is intermittent; he goes to the mines for six or eight months, makes his money, and then goes back to his own kraal and spends it. He is necessarily, therefore, a less expert miner than the Chinaman will become. The Chinaman will come under a three years indenture, and during those three years he will become a very capable man, so that even if white foremen are employed fewer will be required because the labourers will be more expert in their work. Besides that, it must be remembered that all who are accustomed to Chinese labour, and know the conditions under which the best results can be obtained from Chinese labour, declare that Chinamen work best under foremen of their own nationality. How is the increased employment for white men to be found? I admit at once that there will probably be some increase in skilled white labour, but you are going to drive the unskilled white labour out of the country altogether, and declare that this South Africa, which was to be a ground for the employment of British workers, is utterly unfitted for the unskilled Britisher, and that he will not be allowed in the Transvaal at all.

My noble friend Earl Grey said that it was the united wish of the white population of the Transvaal that Chinese labour should be introduced. The last Blue-book is the best answer I can give to that view of the noble Earl. The Blue-book is full of protests against the introduction of Chinese labour. There is very little proof that the Boers are in favour of it. The only Boers who can really be shown to be in favour of it are those who have been nominated on the Legislative Council of the Transvaal. I am not in the least impressed by the united wish which is claimed for the population of the Transvaal; I doubt whether it exists. At any rate, why does not the Government consent to put it to the test? Why do they not consent to a *referendum* such as has been suggested? The noble Duke the other night asked what *referendum* we would propose, and whether we would make the War Contribution Loan Bill the subject of a *referendum* in the Transvaal? Certainly not.

THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH: I said that noble Lords opposite had agreed to lend £30,000,000 on the guarantee of the very same people whom to-day they mistrust with regard to their views on the requirements of labour in South Africa.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH: We in this country, having carried on military operations in South Africa, declared that a certain charge should be placed on the Transvaal to help pay for the war and to restore the country.

THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH: The £30,000,000 was a voluntary gift on the part of the representatives of South Africa to this country on behalf of South Africa.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH: I cannot admit that explanation. However, the noble Duke does not insist that that is a proper subject for a *referendum.* But I say that this Ordinance was undoubtedly a proper subject for a *referendum,* especially as the noble Duke and his friends take the view that the Transvaal should be treated as a self-governing Colony. If you had put it to the test you would have had some ground for saying you were treating the Transvaal as if it were a self-governing Colony.

I come now to another question altogether. Let us assume, as will doubtless be the case, that this Ordinance is passed, and that a vast number of Chinese are poured into the Transvaal. Even then, do you think it will pay those who have introduced them? Do you think that Chinese labour will be sufficiently cheap to effect the desired purpose? It is practically admitted that the high-grade mines can afford to take care of themselves; their profits are sufficient under any circumstances. It is the low-grade mines that have to be cared for. We are told that they can be profitably worked only by means of cheap labour. We have had no estimate from the Government as to the probable cost of the individual Chinaman. The only estimate I have seen is one to be found in a speech by Sir G. Farrar, in which he puts the cost of the individual Chinaman at 80s. per month, including his food, as against 76s., which he puts as the present cost of the Kaffir, including his food. I do not know on what that estimate is founded, but I imagine it is founded on the wages at present paid in the Straits Settlements. We have heard a great deal about Chinese immigration in the Straits Settlements, but I contend that the Straits Settlements form no precedent from which we can judge anything so far as the Transvaal is concerned. The Straits Settlements may really be called a Chinese country. There are in the Straits Settlements 5,018 Europeans, 7,600 Eurasians, 281,933 Chinese, 215,000 Malays, and 57,150 Indians, so that Indians and Chinese together amount to 59 per cent. of the whole population. Of the 339,083 Indians and Chinese, 261,412 are males, and only 77,671 females. If the Chinamen will not bring their women to the Straits Settlements, which are close to their own country, where Chinese conditions exist, and where Chinamen are in a majority of the population, how can you expect that they will take them all the way to South Africa? There is an excellent report in the first Blue-book on the question of the provision of Chinamen, and the conditions of Chinamen in China, California, and British Columbia. The report is written by Mr. Ross Skinner, and it is there distinctly stated that Chinese will be in no sense cheap labour. It is true that in the Straits Settlements the unskilled labourer gets from 10d. to 10½d. per day plus his keep, say 6d. a day, and the skilled Chinaman gets 1s. 10d. and his keep. But what is the price paid to the Chinese miner in America? It seems to me that you are very much more likely to have to pay something like the wage paid to Chinese miners in America; the distance more nearly approaches the distance of the Transvaal from their home, and the conditions under which they will work are much the same. In California the Chinese miner earns from 7s. to. 8s. a day, and in Victoria the surface hand gets 4s. 2d., and more is given to the underground labourers. If you have to pay anything like that, or, say, even 3s. a day for the Chinese miner in South Africa, and you have to add to that the cost of bringing him from China, the cost of keeping him under the conditions which are to be imposed, the cost of policing, and so forth, it seems to me that so far from the Chinaman proving a cheap labourer in South Africa, he will be a very expensive one, and one that will not allow the low-grade mines to be worked profitably by means of cheap labour.

The illustrious statesman who so long filled the place now occupied by the noble Marquess opposite once declared that we did not go to the Transvaal for gold or for extension of territory. We have got gold in no stinted measure, and we have a vast extension of territory. What we were told we went to South Africa for was to obtain the franchise for the Uitlanders, to put down the unrepresentative Government of President Kruger, and to open up a new field for British labour. We have not given the franchise to the Uitlanders; we have taken it away even from those men who already possessed it. We have established a new Government in the Transvaal which, doubtless, is a good Government, but which is not one whit more representative than that of President Kruger. I should have thought there were sufficient racial difficulties in South Africa as it is; you have Boers and Britons, Kaffirs, and Coolies, and now you must needs add a fifth race—the Chinese. You are going to introduce into South Africa a new form of Uitlander, also without the franchise, who must be confined in compounds, and be deprived of many of the attributes of free men. Is that the purpose for which you carried on this great war? The little knot of Peers who sit around me here will doubtless make a poor show in the Lobby presently, but we do, unflinchingly, make our protest against this policy of His Majesty's Government, a policy which we believe to be dangerous and mischievous, and a policy which we hold to be contrary to the deliberate judgment and the highest traditions of the British Empire.

*THE EARL OF LYTTON: My Lords, it is with great diffidence I intervene between the House and the noble Marquess who will reply on behalf of His Majesty's Government, but I wish to refer only to one or two points which, at any rate while I have been present, have not been dealt with in the course of the debate. Let me say in the first place that a good deal has been said during the discussion which is very disheartening to those who regard Imperial and Colonial questions as infinitely more important than the vicissitudes of Party politics in this country, and who desire to see them discussed with some reference to and some consideration for the conditions obtaining in the countries which they primarily concern. For instance, the right rev. Prelate who opened the discussion this afternoon had very little to say about South Africa, but a great deal to say about what he called slavery, and he presumed that everybody who spoke from South Africa, from Lord Milner downwards, was necessarily prejudiced and biased, and that therefore their opinions should be discarded.

THE LORD BISHOP OF HEREFORD: I made no such presumption.

*THE EARL OF LYTTON: I am in the recollection of the House, and your Lordships will bear me out when I say that the whole of the speech of the right rev. Prelate went to show that Lord Milner was not a man to be trusted by this House. He even began his speech by saying that the peasants of Dorsetshire were a safer guide for the House and for the Government than Lord Milner and his Administration. This is just one of those questions which cannot be considered apart from the conditions of the country which it alone concerns; therefore, the decision to which your Lordships will come to-night upon the Motion of the noble Lord opposite ought very largely, if not entirely, to be determined by considerations affecting South Africa. The question you have to decide is a very simple one, viz., whether, in the first place, the existing situation in the Transvaal justifies the policy which the Transvaal Government has proposed and has asked the British Government to sanction; and, in the second place, whether, even if adapted to the needs of South Africa, there is in it anything inherently immoral or opposed to those principles of equity, justice, and humanity which are the very basis of British rule throughout the world. That is the question in regard to which your Lordships will have to arrive at a decision.

First of all, is it expedient? I do not mean from an electioneering point of view. From that point of view, I think that noble Lords opposite are perhaps to be more congratulated than His Majesty's Government. But is it expedient for the future prosperity and welfare of the Transvaal? On that point the arguments are chiefly economical. All those who go to South Africa and come back tell us the same tale about the country. They all say that it is a land with infinite possibilities, but that at the present moment, with the exception of the mining industry in Johannesburg, it is entirely undeveloped. The problem, therefore, before the High Commissioner, and which for many years to come will necessarily be before any High Commissioner, is how best to develop these new colonies, and to bring out to the best advantage those latent resources which they admittedly possess. At this moment, with all the burdens of the late war upon it, South Africa is second only to India in its consumption of British produce. It may easily be understood, therefore, that with time South Africa may become, from a commercial point of view, one of the most valuable of the British possessions. Lord Milner's policy from the first has been a policy of commercial and industrial development. The moment the war was over he set himself to repair the damages it had created, to build railways, to start irrigation works, to develop agriculture, and, above all, to encourage white settlers to come into the country. Noble Lords opposite seem to imagine that the importation of Chinese labour will effectively prevent the immigration of white settlers into the country. I think I can prove that the encouragement of British settlers is the basis and the justification of the whole of Lord Milner's policy. He desires by starting undertakings of this sort to provide occupation for the better class of white settler and at the same time industrially to develop the country. Such a policy as that necessarily involves a good deal of expenditure, and Lord Milner naturally looked to the extension of the mining industry of Johannesburg to enable him to meet that expenditure.

Noble Lords opposite and a great many people in the country are in the habit of speaking of this mining industry as though it were something entirely detached and separate from the rest of the interests of the country, and as though its development would merely have the effect of enriching a few millionaires and of filling the pockets of European shareholders; whereas, as a matter of fact, this mining industry is very closely wrapped up in and intimately connected with the development of the colony as a whole, because at this moment it is practically the only source of revenue to the Government, and in proportion as it expands so also will funds be available for the process of development in other parts of the country. Railway construction, irrigation works, agriculture, industry and commerce, are thus all alike dependent on the output of the mines. To support what I am saying I would ask your Lordships to consider what has happened in other parts of the world. I would call your attention, in particular, to what has happened in the American State of California, because that, like the Transvaal, was at one time an entirely undeveloped country, with great mineral resources. For thirty years after the opening up of that State, gold-mining was its only industry, but to-day the annual value of the agricultural products exceeds by many million dollars the largest output of gold in any one year. Not only that, but the value of its manufactured products is even greater still. Noble Lords opposite ask, what is going to happen when the mines are worked out? It is precisely the policy of Lord Milner, as I understand it, to utilise the mining industry while it is there, so as to ensure that by the time it is worked out the country will be in a flourishing condition, and in a condition which will attract white settlers of the better class to come and live in it. With such an example as that of California before them, surely the Transvaal Government were justified in looking to the mining industry at Johannesburg to enable them to carry out the economical development of the colony. At present that industry on which so much depends is at a complete standstill owing to the scarcity of labour. That shortage of labour has been felt all over South Africa. Noble Lords opposite have implied that that shortage of labour is not real. In Natal, at any rate, the policy of the Government proves the case, because they have been obliged to import Indian coolies. In Cape Colony the Government more than once in the last few years have appointed Committees to inquire into and report upon the labour question; and at the Bloemfontein Conference in March of last year, at which all the South African Colonies were represented, a resolution was unanimously passed declaring that the supply of labour from native sources south of the Zambesi was insufficient, and that the opening up of a new source of supply was imperative. I cannot go into the question in detail at this time of night, but it has been proved up to the hilt that all work of development is hung up owing to the shortage of labour.

There is one other feature of this labour question which I do not think has yet been referred to, but which is of serious importance. At this moment, out of the native population at work in the mines — there are about 68,000 altogether, I believe—80 per cent. come from Portuguese territory, and over that supply the Portuguese Government has complete control. Hence by withholding that supply at any moment it is in the power of the Portuguese Government to bring about an immediate and most disastrous crisis in one of our colonies. Our dependence on the Portuguese Government in this respect was very marked at the Bloemfontein Conference, as we were then obliged to treat Portuguese East Africa on precisely the same footing as one of our own colonies, and to give them the same privileges in the matter of rebate on railway rates as were given to colonial produce. It comes to this, that you are now building up the whole economic and industrial structure of South Africa upon the basis of a monopoly which is vested in the Portuguese Government. That is a matter which I venture to suggest to your Lordships is worthy of serious consideration.

I come, then, to the proposed policy of the Transvaal Government. Here let me take up a point urged by the noble and learned Lord who introduced this Motion to the House, and which was referred to also by the right rev. Prelate who opened the discussion to-day. The noble and learned Lord quoted many extracts from the Blue-book to prove that the efforts of the mine-owners to secure native labour were not genuine or sincere. It is very difficult to understand why the noble Lord should imagine that the mine-owners made false and insincere efforts to secure native labour when it was so short, but that was his contention. I will assume for the purposes of argument that the noble Lord's estimate of the mine-owner is a correct one, I will assume that he—the mine-owner, not the noble Lord—is a man without scruple and without principle, influenced almost entirely by considerations of his pocket, and whose only object is to get as much out of the mine as he can at the lowest possible cost. The Native Labour Association has gone to the expense of £450,000 in efforts to secure native labour, and up to the present they have obtained only 68,000. I think the noble Lord's words were: "The mine-owners saw before them an alluring prospect of cheap Chinese imported labour, and they naturally did all they could to obtain it." But I would point out to the noble Lord—and it has been mentioned by Lord Tweedmouth—that it is very much more expensive to employ this imported Chinese labour than to employ natives. Why, then, should the mine-owners, even at the noble Lord's own estimate of them, go to this expense in seeking for native labour unless they wished to obtain it; and why, above all things, should they seek to introduce the more expensive Chinaman if they could get the native at a cheaper rate? Lastly, we have the assurance of Sir Godfrey Lagden, the head of the Native Labour Department, that the work of the Native Labour Association was perfectly genuine, thorough, and unintermittent. I think I may say, in the words of the noble and learned Lord, that he is no more justified than Lord Milner in bringing groundless and ungenerous charges against those whose conclusions are different from his own.

What is the alternative policy put forward by those who object to the importation of Chinese labour into South Africa? It is, by some means or another, to compel the native Kaffirs to work either in the mines or on the farms. I think the treatment of the native Kaffirs by the Boers is not exactly a treatment which would commend itself to noble Lords opposite. Their plan was to tax the native, and to induce him to work in order to earn the money to pay the taxes. In fact, there are some, and General Botha is amongst the number, who go further still, and desire to expel the natives from those districts in which they are at present settled, and then, if they desire to resettle therein, to compel them to buy back their land. The noble Lord asked the Government whether or not they had considered that they ran the risk of a native rising. Lord Monkswell, in his speech just now, referred to the same matter. The two alternative policies for dealing with this native question have both already been tried in South Africa. What has been the result? When you introduced your 73,000 Indian coolies into Natal, did the Kaffirs rise in revolt because you gave to other people the work they might have done? When you built your railway through Uganda, a country full of natives, did those natives rise in revolt because you built your railway by imported labour? In neither of those instances did the Kaffir object to other people doing work which he hated doing himself. But on the only occasion when the alternative policy of taxing the Kaffir was tried by President Kruger, he was faced immediately with the prospect of a native rising. Therefore, if the alternative policy, the policy which is known to be approved of by the Boers in the country, the policy which is put forward by those who are opposed to the importation of Chinese labour, were put into force—and if you refuse this Ordinance you will drive the mine-owners to combine with the Boers in taking this course—I venture to say that the chances of a native rising would be infinitely greater than under the present policy of the Government.

I come now to the final question of whether or not this system of indentured labour is one which can be condemned on humanitarian grounds. I do not propose to go into that at length. Lord Spencer has already admitted that the word "slavery" is an exaggeration, and I am glad that we obtained from him that admission. It is true that he went on to speak about "cages," and I think the word "cages" is perhaps an even greater exaggeration than the word "slavery," but he then proceeded to ask whether the conditions of the Ordinance were consistent with full liberty. No, they are not consistent with full liberty, but neither are the terms under which Kaffirs are employed either in the mines at Johannesburg or in the mines at Kimberley consistent with full liberty. Are noble Lords opposite aware that the very condition to which the noble Earl objected, viz., that if one of these Chinamen left the compound and was found outside without permission he might be arrested and thrown into prison, is in force at the present moment in South Africa and has been in force for a great many years? Any native who leaves the premises on which he is employed at the mines without the leave of his employer may at any time be seized in exactly the same way. Moreover, in the mines around Kimberley, which have been referred to by noble Lords opposite, I believe I am right in saying the native is never allowed to leave at all, even with the permission of his employer, whereas the Chinaman, under this new Ordinance, will be allowed to go out with leave for forty-eight hours. That may be a policy to which noble Lords opposite object, but if they do their protest comes rather late at the present moment. I admit with noble Lords opposite that this Ordinance has been very much improved by the regulations which have since been passed, and I now believe that after the pledges have been given in this House and in the other House of Parliament, and in view of the regulations which are now before the country, every effort will be made and every care will be taken to secure to these Chinese labourers who will be imported into South Africa, in the first place, a full knowledge of the circumstances under which they are going to be employed, and further a treatment to which no exception can be taken on the grounds of humanity. I will conclude by hoping that all those noble Lords who continue to have confidence in Lord Milner, and those who share with him the responsibility of government in South Africa, will show that confidence by voting against this Motion to-night, and I would ask them to remember that His Majesty's Government have not allowed themselves to be deterred by any Party or electioneering considerations from boldly facing their responsibility and allowing the Transvaal Government to settle this labour difficulty in its own way. I think, therefore, that the Government deserve the full support of all those who have hitherto approved of their South African policy.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of LANSDOWNE): I should have been perfectly ready to leave this question where my noble friend who has just addressed the House left it, but perhaps it will be expected that a few words should be said from this Bench before the debate closes. This is now the fourth evening on which your Lordships have discussed this question of Chinese immigration, and I do not think that those who are prepared to defend the Ordinance, and to accept full responsibility for it, have any cause to be dissatisfied with the course of the discussion, or with the movement of opinion which it has disclosed. The speeches which have been delivered, for what I may call the prosecution, have advanced again and again arguments with which we have become extremely familiar, but which I do not think have added very much to our enlightenment. The speeches for the defence have, on the contrary, reinforced our position by statements of fact of which the House was not formerly aware; and a good deal of light has been thrown alike upon the local conditions in South Africa, the wishes of those on the spot, and, above all, upon the nature of the precautions which it has been determined to adopt in order to prevent this Ordinance from leading to any abuses. It is a remarkable illustration of what I have said that we should have had the privilege of listening this evening to the speech which was delivered by the most rev. Primate, and I must say that I never heard in this House a speech of which the tone was more impartial and judicial. The most rev. Primate, at any rate, will not be told that his views are influenced by considerations connected with the dividends upon South African gold mines. It was remarkable to hear him give the reasons which, in spite of the obvious reluctance with which he regards these proposals, led him to determine that, on high public grounds, he was not justified in opposing the Ordinance.

We are going in a few minutes to proceed to a division, and I ask your Lordships to bear in mind what the question is upon which we are going to divide. We are not asked to affirm a Resolution that Chinese immigration, with or without these particular conditions, is in itself an objectionable thing, but we are asked to resolve that the Ordinance should not be allowed to come into operation until the grant to the colony of full representative Government. But many of the speeches delivered have gone much further than this. There has been a considerable difference between the purport of the Resolution and many of the speeches in support of it. The Resolution is a dilatory Resolution but many of the speeches have been irreconcilable speeches. It must be remembered that the Transvaal has to pass through three stages before it receives the full measure of self-government. The three stages are, first that of a Crown colony; next, the stage of representative institutions; and finally, the stage of full and responsible self-government. At this moment the Transvaal is in the first stage, and it is obvious that it cannot reach the third stage for some considerable time. This Resolution, in effect, proposes that the Transvaal, until it arrives at the final stage of full and responsible self-government is, as a preparation for that full and responsible self-government, to pass through a period of confusion and insolvency. Its finances are to be disorganised, its development is to be paralysed, and, in our intense desire to encourage white settlers, we are asked to adopt a measure which will not improbably, if adopted, have the effect of driving out those white settlers who are already there. And this is all to be done in the teeth of the preponderating opinion of the Colony itself.

I will not travel over the arguments which have been advanced again and again in order to show that there does exist a large preponderance of opinion in favour of the Ordinance in the Transvaal. I should be content if it only rested on the recorded opinions of the Legislative Council, which has not, I think, been spoken of with all the respect to which it is entitled. There are thirty members upon that Council, of whom fourteen are unofficial. I want to read to your Lordships a description of those unofficial members of the Legislative Council. This is what Lord Milner has to say of them—

> "The unofficial members of the Legislative Council are really representative men, who have from the first shown themselves independent of Government, while sensitive to public opinion. Of these non-official members, fourteen in number, nine voted for the motion, and one did not vote. Of the nine supporters, four were Boer members, who all spoke as well as voted for the motion. The fifth Boer member took no part. Of the other five non-official supporters of the motion, two are mining men, two are leading men of business, and one is a British farmer, who has lived in the country for years, and possesses in an exceptional degree the confidence of both Dutch and British."

Now, my Lords, when reference was made to these unofficial members the noble Lord opposite, Lord Monkswell, said he hoped they voted according to their conscience. I say that it would be a monstrous insult to the members of that Legislative Council to suppose that upon a matter of this gravity they did not vote in accordance with the dictates of their conscience.

*LORD MONKSWELL: I merely said the official members of the Legislature might have had some influence.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: Upon what grounds are we to refuse to the colony this measure of relief which is so much desired. We are told in the first place that there is plenty of black labour to be obtained. One of the speakers last night gave us the number of the black population in South Africa which he regarded as available for this purpose. I have had occasion to look into this aspect of the case, and I am convinced that we must hesitate a good deal before we assume that the whole of the black population is a fit recruiting ground for labour for the mines. When Lord Milner was in this country I discussed with him the possibility of finding recruits in the British Protectorates, but I found that the natives of those regions were, to a great extent, required for the development of their own country, and it was not desirable that they should be too much encouraged to go elsewhere. But, besides that, it should be remembered that these natives are much more helpless and ignorant than the Chinese, and therefore much more liable to those influences against which it is desired to guard the Chinese recruit. They are also much more liable to be injuriously affected by climatic changes and the trying conditions which accompany labour in the mines. Then it is said that white labour can be obtained in abundance. There again, my Lords, we have the case cited by my noble friend who spoke last of an association which spent something like half-a-million of money in an attempt to obtain white labour. White labour has been tried and found prohibitive, and, more than that, it has been ascertained upon the highest authority that the employment of white unskilled labour for this purpose is repugnant to colonial feeling. I noticed the other day an account of a deputation received by Lord Milner a few days ago, when a speech was delivered by a Mr. Strong, one of the miners' delegates. Mr. Strong said that—

> "He deprecated the proposal for cheap white labour. This would mean the introduction of an underpaid and dissatisfied class of labourer, which would be the prey of official agitators, and there is a deep-seated feeling that it is not desirable that white labourers should be employed upon what is known in South Africa as Kaffir labour."

The main objection, as I understand, is directed to the conditions under which the Chinese immigrants are to be employed. It has been said more than once, and I say it again, that, if it were possible, the Government would gladly avoid these stringent conditions, which I do not suppose anybody likes, upon their merits, but the colony insists upon them, and although we have some colonial opposition to Chinese immigration accompanied by those restrictions, we should have the Colonies solid against the introduction of Chinese labour without those restrictions. The attitude of the Colonies is perfectly natural and intelligible. Their great desire is to preserve these regions for white men, and they do not desire to see the introduction of a prolific race, which, if it acquires a domicile in the country, may turn the Colonies into something other than the heritage of white men. Can we then blame these colonial Governments if they attach to the entrance of Asiatic immigrants strict conditions as to the nature, duration, and place of their employment? These conditions are constantly spoken of as if they were indignities of the most grievous kind. The noble Lord opposite called them shocking. But has it not been amply proved during the course of this debate that a great part of the objections which are raised to the conditions have turned out to be based upon a complete misapprehension of their nature? The word "slavery" has been used inside and outside the House. I suppose all your Lordships have been treated to specimens of literature on the subject. I have received a document headed with these words—

> "Will the British people allow the Imperial Government to assist cosmopolitan speculators to drive British workmen from the Transvaal in order that they may replace them by Chinese slaves?"

That sounds extravagant and ridiculous, but does it really in essence go much beyond the speech of the noble and learned mover of the Resolution or of the right rev. Prelate? The right rev. Prelate spoke of an intention to appeal, if necessary, to the people; but if the appeal is to be made in that way I do not know that we shall have reason to regard the verdict with much respect.

Prejudice has also been imported into the discussion with reference to the residence of the immigrants. I am not surprised, I confess, that some of us should have been a little puzzled as to the precise conditions under which these Chinamen are to be allowed to dwell at the mines. Very different accounts have been given of these places of residence, which have been variously compared to a Chinese village, a garden city, and a cage. A garden city may not be a correct description, but I am sure that the word "cage" is not correct. Nothing has impressed me more than the fact that Lord Spencer, the fairest and most generous of opponents should have been so saturated with the jargon of this question that, by what must have been an accidental slip of the tongue, he let fall that disastrous and most unfair expression. If it can be used by a man of Lord Spencer's temperament, you can imagine to what kind of lengths assailants of this Ordinance will go when they are on the platform with nobody to contradict or challenge them. A similar amount of prejudice surrounds the question of the immigrants' wives. We now know that the regulations permit any immigrant to take his wife and family with him; but, supposing they did not, is that such a terrible state of things to contemplate? Let me again quote a single sentence from a letter which appeared the other day over the signature of Mr. George Wray, the late Protector of Chinese in the Straits Settlements. Mr. Wray begins by explaining that no Chinese emigrant dreams of taking his family with him unless he is going of his own free will as a paid passenger to a place which his own countrymen have proved to the hilt to be suitable. In this respect, I venture to think that Chinese emigrants show an extremely wise discretion. In the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States only 63,000 out of 463,000 Chinese have families, and the Chinese colony is admitted to be a most valuable element. The fact is that it is idle to suppose that when large gangs of labourers are anywhere employed on temporary work they are likely, speaking generally, to be anything but celibate. When large gangs of labourers are employed in out-of-the-way places on railway construction or other public works, do your Lordships suppose that they take with them their wives and families? I do not believe that anything of the kind happens. The fact is, in the Transvaal there is a very grievous dearth of labour. We want an arrangement which will suit the requirements of the Colony, and which will suit the Chinese themselves, and in our belief this Ordinance, with the regulations with which your Lordships are now familiar, does accomplish this two-fold purpose. We, at any rate, are prepared to accept the full responsibility for this Ordinance and for the regulations. And, my Lords, we are strongly convinced that although the arguments which have been used against it may answer the purpose when they are used upon the platform and under circumstances when it is impossible to examine them or to reply to them, those arguments when they are used and laid before your Lordships' House, where they can be examined and can be replied to, will be considered by your Lordships to be of a kind which will not justify you in withholding your consent from the proposals of the Colony, which we very gladly and confidently endorse.

On Question,

Their Lordships divided:—Contents, 25; Not-Contents, 97.

CONTENTS.

Nothhampton, M.
Ripon, M.

Beauchamp, E.
Carrington, E.
Crewe, E.
Kimberley, E.
Russell, E.
Temple, E.

Hereford, L. Bp.

Boyle, L. (*E. Cork and Orrery*)
Brassey, L.
Coleridge, L. [*Teller.*]
Denman, L.
Kinnaird, L.
Monkswell, L.
Northbourne, L.

O'Hagan, L.
Reay, L.
Ribblesdale, L. [*Teller.*]
Sandhurst, L.
Stanley of Alderley, L.
Sudley, L. (*E. Arran.*)
Tweedmouth, L.
Wandsworth, L.
Welby, L.

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Halsbury, E. (*L. Chancellor.*)
Vane, E. (*M. Londonderry.*)
(*L. President.*)
Salisbury, M. (*L. Privy Seal.*)

Argyle, D.
Bedford, D.
Grafton, D.
Marlborough, D.
Portland, D.
Wellington, D.

Abercorn, M. (*D. Abercorn.*)
Ailesbury, M.
Lansdowne, M.
Winchester, M.
Pembroke and Montgomery, E. (*L. Steward.*)
Clarendon, E. (*L. Chamberlain.*)
Ancaster, E.
Camperdown, E.
Carnwath, E.
Cawdor, E.
Denbigh, E.
Doncaster, E. (*D. Buccleuch and Queensberry.*)
Ducie, E.
Grey, E.
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Harrowby, E.
Howe, E.
Lathom, E.
Lauderdale, E.
Leven and Melville, E.
Lytton, E.
Northesk, E.

Onslow, E.
Scarbrough, E.
Selborne, E.
Shaftesbury, E.
Stradbroke, E.
Strafford, E.
Waldegrave, E. [*Teller.*]
Yarborough, E.

Churchill, V. [*Teller.*]
Colville of Culross, V.
Goschen, V.
Hutchinson, V. (*E Donoughmore*
Knutsford, V.

Bristol, L. Bp.

Alington, L.
Alverstone, L.
Armstrong, L.
Ashbourne, L.
Ashcombe, L.
Barrymore, L.
Belhaven and Stenton, L.
Belper, L.
Brodrick, L. (*V. Middleton.*)
Chelmsford, L.
Colchester, L.
Cottesloe, L.
De Mauley, L.
de Ros, L.
Dunmore, L. (*E. Dunmore.*)
Fairlie, L. (*E. Glasgow.*)
Farquhar, L.
Fermanagh, L. (*E. Erne.*)

Gormanston, L (*V. Gormanston*
Grenfell, L.
Heneage, L.
Hylton, L.
Iveagh, L.
Kelvin, L.
Kenmare, L. (*E. Kenmare*)
Kenry, L. (*E. Dunraven and Mount-Earl*)
Kenyon, L.
Kilmarnock, L. (*E. Erroll.*)
Kintore, L. (*E. Kintore*)
Knollys, L.
Lawrence, L.
Meredyth, L. (*L. Athlumney.*)
Methuen, L.
Monckton, L. (*V. Galway.*)
Oranmore and Browne, L.
Rathmore, L.
Rayleigh, L.
Revelstoke, L.
Robertson, L.
Romilly, L.
Rothschild, L.
Saltoun, L.
Shute, L. (*V. Barrington.*)
Sinclair, L.
Stewart of Garlies, L. (*E. Galloway.*)
Suffield, L.
Trevor, L.
Vivian, L.
Wenlock, L.
Windsor, L.
Wolverton, L.
Wrottesley, L.

House adjourned at Twelve o'clock (midnight), till To-morrow, a quarter past Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 21*st March*, 1904.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. **SPEAKER** laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz. :—Appleby Corporation Gas Bill [Lords]; London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Bill [Lords]. Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

SUBSTITUTED BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. **SPEAKER** laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, introduced in accordance with the provisions of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz. :—Govan Burgh (Electricity) Bill [Lords]; Young and Bell's Patents Bill [Lords]. Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. **SPEAKER** laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz. :—Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill. Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow.

Littlestone-on-Sea and District Water Bill; South Shields Gas Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Chippenham Gas Bill; Great Eastern Railway Bill; Sheppy Gas Bill; Torquay Tramways Bill; Wellington (Somerset) Gas Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Metropolitan Common Scheme (Hillingdon East) Provisional Order Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Metropolitan Common Scheme (Farnborough) Provisional Order Bill. Considered; to be read the third time To-morrow.

Soothill Nether Urban District Tramways Bill. Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table and to be printed.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP E).

Sir **ALEXANDER HARGREAVES BROWN** reported from the Committee on Group E of Private Bills, That, for the convenience of parties, they had adjourned till Wednesday next, at half-past Eleven o'clock. Report to lie upon the Table.

North and South Woolwich Electric Railway Bill. Reported [Parties do not proceed]; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP No. 4).

Mr. **RUSSELL REA** reported from the Committee on Group No. 4 of Railway Bills; That Sir Theodore Doxford, one of the members of the said Committee, was not present during the Sitting of the Committee this day. Report to lie upon the Table.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to make provision for dealing with the Trustees' Preference Shares of the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company, Limited, and the Trustees' Certificates issued in respect thereof; and for other purposes." [New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company Bill [Lords.]

New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTIONS (HOURS OF POLLING).

Petitions for legislation; from Lewisham; and Fulham; to lie upon the Table.

FRANCHISE AND REMOVAL OF WOMEN'S DISABILITIES BILL.

Petition from Battersea, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (QUALIFICATION OF WOMEN) BILL.

Petition from Lewisham, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

OLD AGE PENSIONS (No. 2) BILL.

Petition from Battersea, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE.

Petition from Wolverhampton, for extension to women; to lie upon the Table.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

Petition from West Bromwich, against; to lie upon the Table.

RE-VACCINATION BILL.

Petition from Battersea, against; to lie upon the Table.

SHOPS BILL.

Petition from Battersea, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (NAVY VOTES).

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 17th March, 1904, authorising the temporary application of Surpluses on certain Navy Votes for the year 1903–4 to meet Excesses on other Navy Votes for the same year [pursuant to Resolution of the House of 4th March, 1879]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 105.]

ARMY CLOTHING FACTORY.

Annual Account presented, of the Royal Army Clothing Factory for the year 1902–3, with Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 106.]

SUPERANNUATIONS.

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 12th March, 1904, declaring that for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the office of Assistant Legal Adviser of the Foreign Office, professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired in the public service are required [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

BOARD OF EDUCATION (PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, ETC.).

Copy presented, of Statistics of Public Elementary Schools, Pupil Teacher Centres, and Training Colleges, 1902–3 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Ninth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.

Copy presented, of Abstract of Accounts of the University of Glasgow for the year ending 30th September, 1903 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 107.]

BAHAMAS.

Copy presented, of General Descriptive Report on the Bahamas Islands, in which is included the Annual Report for 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

VENEZUELA (No. 1, 1904).

Copy presented, of Award of the Tribunal of Arbitration, constituted in virtue of the Protocols signed at Washington, 7th May, 1903, between Germany, Great Britain, and Italy, on the one hand, and Venezuela on the other hand [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE (BRITISH COLONIES WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES).

Return ordered, "showing, for 1901 and 1902, the imports from Foreign Countries into British India, the Self-Governing Colonies, and the following Crown Colonies: Straits Settlements, Ceylon, Mauritius, Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad, distinguishing (*a*) imports of food, drink, and tobacco; raw materials and articles mainly unmanufactured; and articles wholly or mainly manufactured; and (*b*) principal articles (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 322, of Session 1903)."—(*Mr. Gerald Balfour.*)

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Charles Henry Lyell, esquire, for the County of Dorset (Eastern Division).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Loan Expenditure for Civil and Revenue Purposes.

MR. BARRAN (Leeds, N.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the estimated expenditure out of loans under the Uganda Railway Act, the Pacific Cable Act, the Telegraph Acts, the Public Works Act, and any similar Acts authorising loan expenditure for Civil or Revenue purposes in the years 1903–4, 1904–5, respectively; and what are the sums charged upon Civil or Revenue Votes in those two years for interest on those loans, and for reduction of capital, respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Victor Cavendish.*)

	Estimated Issues.		Annuities charged on Votes.*	
	1903–4.	1904–5.	1903–4.	1904–5.
	£	£	£	£
Uganda Railway Acts, 1896 and 1902	67,000	219,000	281,593	305,117
Pacific Cable Act, 1901	—	—	†	†
Telegraph Acts, 1892 to 1899	780,000	‡	284,880	331,469
Public Offices (Acquisition of Site) Act, 1895	—	—	16,766	16,766
Public Offices (Whitehall) Site Act, 1897	—	—	19,337	19,337
Public Buildings Expenses Act, 1903	158,500	197,000	—	2,305
Land Registry (New Buildings) Act, 1900	16,500	17,000	6,981	7,161
Public Offices Site (Dublin) Act, 1903	12,000	50,000	—	—
Royal Niger Company Act, 1899	—	—	44,475	44,475
Light Railways Act, 1896	57,695	50,000	3,180	5,467
Light Railways (Ireland) Acts, 1889 to 1893	—	—	47,038	24,734
Tramways (Ireland) Act, 1895	—	—	13,586	13,586
Railways (Ireland) Act, 1896, and Marine Works (Ireland) Act, 1902	20,000	58,000	22,799	23,854

* To enable the Annuities to be separated into interest and capital, longer notice would be required. The Question only appeared on the 18th March.

† The Annuity of £77,545 payable under this Act is not chargeable directly on Votes, but on the funds of the Pacific Cable Board which receives a grant in aid of its expenses.

‡ The total authorised issues under existing Acts will be completed in 1903–4, and issues in 1904–5 will depend upon further legislation.

Expenditure under Naval Works Act.

MR. RUNCIMAN (Dewsbury): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what is the estimated expenditure out of loans under all Naval Works Acts in the years 1903–4, 1904–5, respectively; and what are the sums charged upon Navy Votes in those two years, for interest on those loans and for reduction on capital respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Pretyman.*) The total estimated expenditure out of loans under all Naval Works Acts in the two years 1903–4 and 1904–5 is £8,605,387. Of this

£3,407,387 will, it is estimated, have been expended by the 31st instant, leaving £5,198,000 available for 1904–5. The sums charged upon Navy Votes in these two years for interest on those loans and for reduction of capital are as follows:—

	Repayment of Capital.	Interest.	Total.
	£	£	£
1903-4.—In respect of advances by National Debt Commissioners to 31st December, 1902	227,032	274,978	502,010
1904–5.—In respect of advances by National Debt Commissioners to 31st December, 1903	310,289	323,949	634,238

Construction of Steamships under Cunard Agreement.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the engine and hull designs of the fast steamships which are to be constructed under the Cunard agreement have yet been completed; if so, whether the building has yet been started; and when the first instalment in respect of these vessels will appear on the Estimates.

(*Answered by Mr. Pretyman.*) As the Admiralty are not responsible for the engine and hull designs of these vessels, which have not yet been submitted to them in their final form, I am unable to give authoritative information with respect to their progress, but it is understood that they are well advanced. The building of the vessels has not yet commenced. I am not at present in a position to answer the latter part of the Question.

Certification of Death.

Sir THOMAS DEWAR (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government have yet considered the recommendations contained in the Death Certification Report of 1893; and, if so, will he state whether he contemplates the introduction of legislation on the subject.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas.*) The Report to which my hon. friend refers has been considered by the Government with a view to legislation; but, as my right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board has stated on previous occasions, it has not yet been found practicable to bring forward a Bill on the subject.

Carcases of Whales off Shetland Coast.

Mr. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the fact that the destruction of whales off the Shetland coast is accompanied by circumstances fraught with danger to the fishing and crofting community, he will refuse the further extension of whaling stations until proper provision is made for burying, burning, or utilising the carcases.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) The consent of the Board of Trade is only necessary in these cases so far as the proposed works may interfere with navigation; but having regard to the strong representations which have been made to me on the subject I am conferring with the Secretary for Scotland as to whether anything can be done to prevent any danger or annoyance being caused to the fishing and crofting communities by the operations proposed to be carried on at the whaling stations in question.

Proposed Railway from Dunfermline to Kincardine.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that it is proposed to construct a railway from Dunfermline to Kincardine, which will pass along the foreshore of the Firth of Forth in the vicinity of Culross, and which will seriously injure the amenities of the neighbourhood; and whether, having regard to the facts that, since the construction of such a line was authorised by Parliament, it has been decided to form a naval base at St. Margaret's Hope, which may be expected to increase largely the population of the district, and that a large sum of money has recently been devoted by Mr. Andrew Carnegie to the enhancement of the amenities of Dunfermline and its environs, the Board will exercise the power reserved to the Crown by Section 9 of The North British Railway (General Powers) Act, 1898, and induce the railway company to adopt a slightly different route which would be less harmful to the beauty of the coast.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) My attention was called to this matter last December by the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty, but as the works had been authorised by Act of Parliament I was obliged to inform the council that the Department regretted that they were unable to assist them. The Board are advised that the section referred to would not authorise them either to veto the scheme or to require the railway company to adopt a route outside the limits of deviation as fixed by the Act. These limits for the greater part of the distance do not extend on the land side above high water mark. I have drawn the attention of the railway company to the right hon. Gentleman's Question.

Teachers' Superannuation.

MR. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education, whether any certificated elementary teacher who is employed under the new regulations for training pupil teachers in a secondary school, is permitted to count his service in such capacity as recorded service within the meaning of The Teachers' Superannuation Act, 1898, and of the Education Code.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) Under existing rules the service of a teacher whose whole time is devoted to the instruction of pupil teachers counts as recorded service within the meaning of The Teachers' Superannuation Act, 1898, and of the Code. The point, however, raises very considerable difficulties, which are receiving the consideration of the Board.

Seizure and Disposal of Contraband Tobacco.

MR. WHITMORE (Chelsea): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the quantity of tobacco which has been seized as contraband during the last five years; and how has it been disposed of.

(*Answered by Mr. Victor Cavendish.*) The quantity of tobacco (including cigars) seized by Customs Officers during the five years ended 31st March, 1903, was 39,331 lbs. During the same period the seized tobacco, etc. was accounted for, as follows: Sent to the Royal Botanic Gardens (Kew and Edinburgh), 15,000 lbs.; Sent to the Criminal Lunatic Asylums (Broadmoor, Dundrum, and Perth), 9,800 lbs.; Stalks destroyed, 7,800 lbs.; Natural loss by drying, 3,800 lbs.; Cigars, etc. sold at Customs' sales, 2,500 lbs.; Total 38,900 lbs. The balance was in hand.

Pensions of Senior Abstractors.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, when the class of senior abstractors was formed, the hardship which would result from the Treasury only allowing half of the temporary service of the men concerned to count for pension purposes was considered, and whether he will state what steps the Treasury is prepared to take not to inflict hardships on men promoted to the establishment late in life; and will he explain why those writers employed before 19th August, 1871, and since promoted to better posts than abstractorships, were allowed to count all their temporary service for the purposes of pension, in view of the fact that the regulations in force for writers did not recognise that any service could be reckoned towards pension.

(*Answered by Mr. Victor Cavendish.*) When the class of senior abstractors was formed it was not considered that there was any hardship in allowing only half the temporary service to reckon for pension, seeing that the officers in question were not entitled to reckon any of such service, and I see no reason for taking any other view at the present time. As regards the latter portion of the Question, I fear that I can add nothing to the Answer given by me on the 24th ult.†

Expenses of British Officers attached to Belligerent Forces in the Far East.

Sir JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the amount of expenditure sanctioned for naval and military officers respectively employed specially to observe and report upon operations of war now proceeding in the Far East.

(*Answered by Mr. Victor Cavendish.*) The expenditure sanctioned for this purpose amounts to £7,424 per annum. This is in addition to the cost (about £1,600 per annum) of four officers previously attached to the Japanese Army under existing regulations.

Seating of Young Children in Scotch Schools.

Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary for Scotland, seeing that in the Report on Primary Education in Ireland by Mr. F. H. Dale, His Majesty's Inspector of Schools, attention is directed in Paragraph 44 to the fact that in some cases the only provision made for seating infants consists of a form without desk or back, while in English schools special desks for infants are practically universal; and, seeing that the seating accommodation made for infants in schools in the Highland Crofting Counties invariably consists of a form without a back, will the Board of Education for Scotland consider the advisability of recommending a better system of seating for young children.

(*Answered by Mr. A. Graham Murray.*) The Department is fully alive to the importance of having proper desks for infants as well as other scholars, and has laid down the rule that the benches should be fitted with backs. The chief inspector in those districts states that he invariably urges the observance of this rule and that the cases are few where the fault is now found.

Birmingham Telegraph Department—Delay in Filling Vacancy.

Viscount MORPETH (Birmingham, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he will explain the reason for the delay in filling up the vacancy that exists in the clerks' class in the Birmingham Telegraph Department, caused through the retirement of an official.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) Inquiry is being made on the subject, and I will communicate the result to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Salaries of Irish National School Teachers.

Mr. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork County, N.E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will explain, under the new system of payment adopted by the Commissioners of National Education in April, 1900, why first class salary is denied to teachers who obtained by examination the second division of second class in July, 1897, and the first division of second class, with special distinction, at the end of their training course in July, 1899, and who have given four years efficient service as principal teachers without receiving first class salary, while under the rule then prevailing it was only necessary to serve two years to entitle them to this benefit.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) Class salary has been abolished since the new system of payments came into operation after the 1st April, 1900. The system of promotion of teachers by examination and service in force up to April, 1900, has been also abolished from same time (Rule 195A). The teachers referred to were only in the second class when the new rules came into operation, and were not entitled to first class salary. In every case where the Commissioners considered the new rules operated inequitably they gave special consideration to such cases, and if any particular case is brought under notice it will be considered.

Irish Land Purchase—New Tenancies.

Mr. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the efforts of some landlords to create new tenancies for the purposes of sale in persons having hitherto no connection with their estates, including pensioners; whether such sales at the present price of Consols will cause considerable loss to the Irish ratepayers by the depletion of the Development Grant; and if the Government will therefore instruct the Estates Commissioners to reject applications for advances made by outsiders so long as Consols are below par.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxx, 837.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) In all cases of tenancies created since January, 1901, the Estates Commissioners require a special report from their inspectors, and no advances exceeding the limit of £500 mentioned in Section 53 are made without due regard to the wants and circumstances of other persons residing in the neighbourhood.

Agricultural Legislation and Administration in Denmark.

MR. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will cause to be issued as a Parliamentary Paper the Special Report recently made by Lord Ikerrin to the Board of Agriculture and Technical Instruction in Ireland as to Agricultural Legislation and Administration in Denmark.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The Report has been published by the Department, and a considerable number of copies have been distributed. Further copies may be had on application to the Department. It is not considered necessary to lay the Report on the Table of the House.

Helpless Discharged Soldiers.

MR. WEIR: To ask the Secretary of State for War, having regard to the fact that under Rule 1822 of the King's Regulations helpless discharged soldiers, when sent to their homes, should be accompanied by an unarmed conducting party, transmitting at the same time a medical certificate stating the necessity for its employment, will he state why the non-commissioned officer who in October, 1903, escorted to his home in the Island of Lewis a private soldier in the Scots Guards, certificate of discharge No. 4731, was not in possession of the usual medical certificate.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster.*) The hon. Member has evidently misread paragraph 1822, King's Regulations, which provides that a medical certificate shall be forwarded to the general officer who authorises the despatch of the escorting party; but it is not usual or necessary that the party shall be furnished with a medical certificate.

Reorganisation of Royal Engineers—Lord Esher's Recommendations.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Report of Lord Esher's Departmental Committtee on the Royal Engineers has been adopted; and, if so, could particulars of the sub-division of work be given.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster.*) The more important recommendations have been approved and in part already adopted; but as the sub-division of work is at present being considered in connection with the general redistribution of duties in the War Office, it is not possible to give any further particulars.

Report on Trinidad Riots.

MR. WEIR: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is now in a position to state when the Report of the Chief Justice of British Guiana relative to the disturbances at Port of Spain, Trinidad, will be laid upon the Table of the House.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) I am not at present able to give this information, but if the hon. Member will repeat this Question a week hence, I hope to be able to give him an answer.

Finances of Transvaal and Orange River Colony.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has received any further particulars or information in regard to the finances of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony since the telegraphic despatch of Lord Milner of 1st February; and, if so, will he now lay the despatches upon the Table.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) It will be necessary for me to elucidate certain matters by further communication with Lord Milner before laying Papers, which I hope to do at an early date.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will lay upon the Table a Return containing the particulars of Lord Milner's original Budget estimate of the revenue and expenditure of the Transvaal and Orange Free State for 1903–4, and of the Inter-Colonial Budget (as mentioned in his despatch of 1st February), together with his latest revised estimate of the same Budgets.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) The particulars as to the Budgets of the Transvaal, Orange River Colony, and of the Inter-Colonial Budget will be found at pp. 354 sqq. of Cd. 1895. I will lay the desired Return upon the Table at an early date.

Sir ROBERT REID (Dumfries Burghs): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will lay upon the Table a Return of all sums paid by this country since the end of the war in respect of the Transvaal or Orange River Colony beyond the actual cost of the war, with a statement of the application of such sums and of any moneys repaid on account thereof.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) The sums referred to and the purposes of the expenditure are given in the Civil Services Additional Estimates, 1902–3, dated 3rd November 1902, and Civil Services Supplementary Estimates, 1902–3, dated 24th February, 1903. They amount to £8,000,000 and £1,000,000 respectively, of which £3,000,000 have, as was intended, been repaid.

Transvaal Labour Ordinance—Date of Coming into Operation.

Major SEELY (Isle of Wight): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the proclamation by the Governor rendering the Transvaal Labour Ordinance operative, has been issued; and, if so, what date is named in the proclamation for the taking effect of the Ordinance.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) The proclamation has not yet been issued.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Mounted Infantry Volunteers.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if, having regard to the expenditure of £15,000 of public money in equipping the Mounted Infantry Volunteers, and of a like sum in training them during the past four years, and to the efficient state in which the several companies are reported to be and to the necessity for more mounted men, he has come to a decision as to the maintenance of the extra capitation grant of 80s. for provision of horses and of the camp allowances.

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Arnold-Forster, Belfast, W.): Yes, Sir. It has been decided, pending the Report of the Royal Commission on Militia and Volunteers, to postpone for one year the withdrawal of the special grants to existing members of the Mounted Infantry Volunteer Companies.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT: And will recruiting still go on?

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I should like to have notice of that Question.

Barracks in South Africa.

Mr. AINSWORTH (Argyll): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what is the total amount spent or proposed to be spent out of funds raised by loan or otherwise for the hutting of troops in South Africa, and whether this sum represents accommodation sufficient for 25,000 men for thirty years.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: The total actual and estimated expenditure for permanent accommodation of the troops in South Africa amounts to £3,333,000. Accommodation is being provided for about 21,500 men; the accommodation for the most part is in the form of huts.

Army Districts Inquiry.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state the exact scope of the inquiry to be conducted by the Committee appointed at his request by the Adjutant-General;

and whether their inquiry into the redistribution of districts will be preceded by a decision as to the number of battalions and of men to be maintained at home.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: The Committee is inquiring how far the principle of decentralisation, as recommended by the War Office (Reconstitution) Committee, can be applied to the existing organisation and distribution of the troops at home. No steps will be taken which will be incompatible with any alteration which may be made in the number and distribution of the troops to be maintained at home.

Flags on Public Buildings.

SIR CARNE RASCH (Essex, Chelmsford); I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state why the flag on the War Office was mast high on Friday last when the Union Jack on all other public buildings in London was half-mast, on account of the death of the Duke of Cambridge.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: The flag was correctly and by order hoisted mast high on Friday, the 18th instant, that being the anniversary of the birth of Her Royal Highness Princess Louise.

SIR CARNE RASCH: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Admiralty flag was hoisted half-mast, and can he say whether the hoisting of the flag at full mast on the War Office was conducted by the same official who hoisted it at half-mast on the relief of Ladysmith?

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I am not responsible for the errors of the Admiralty.

Naval Construction.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what is the estimated amount that will have been expended on new construction for the period of nine years ending on the 31st March next; and whether he can give any estimate of the corresponding expenditure by France, Russia, and Germany for the same period.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. PRETYMAN, Suffolk, Woodbridge): The figures for the nine years, 1895–1904, are as follows:—Great Britain, £69,981,078; France, £32,499,491; Russia, £28,667,102; Germany, £22,153,247. The figures given for this country represent actual expenditure on new construction, except for the year ending the 31st instant, but those for France, Russia, and Germany, are taken from the Estimates of the respective countries, information as to actual expenditure not being available. The figures for Great Britain also include the cost of gun-mountings, which are not included in the New Construction Estimates of foreign countries, and which in the case of this country have amounted during the last nine years to nearly £5,000,000.

Missions to Indentured Chinese.

CAPTAIN ELLICE (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies what arrangements will be made for the religious instruction of the Chinese indentured labourers in the compounds; and whether Christian ministers of all denominations will be allowed into the compounds to give such religious instruction.

*__THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES__ (Mr. LYTTELTON, Warwick and Leamington): I am not able to make a definite statement on the subject as to which I am in communication with Lord Milner. If Christian ministers desire to go into the compounds, and the Chinese consent to receive them, the same facilities will be afforded to all denominations by the Government.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): Has it not been arranged that these Chinese labourers shall be provided by the Government with idols of brass made in Birmingham?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member had better put the Question down.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Very well, Sir; I will.

British Crown Colonies and the Sugar Convention.

MR. CHARLES McARTHUR (Liverpool, Exchange): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether at the Brussels International Conference of 1903 His Majesty's Government signified its adhesion, on behalf of the Crown Colonies, to the Convention then arranged; and whether it is consistent with the provisions of Article 11 (A) of the said Convention that bounty-fed sugar from the United States should be admitted into Bermuda on terms of fiscal equality with British and German sugars which are free of bounty.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): At the same time may I ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in view of the declaration in Protocol A 3 of the Brussels Sugar Convention that His Majesty's Government had power to adhere to the Convention on behalf of the Crown Colonies and that it did so adhere, will he explain on what grounds His Majesty's Government have arrived at the conclusion that they are not bound by the Convention to require the Crown Colony of Bermuda to impose countervailing duties on or to prohibit the importation of bounty-fed sugars from the United States; have His Majesty's Government communicated to the Brussels Permanent Commission as required by the Convention the laws, orders, and regulations on the taxation of sugar in force in Bermuda, and has the Commission pronounced thereon; and in what way do His Majesty's Government now propose to carry out their engagements under the Convention with respect to Bermuda.

*MR. LYTTELTON: In answer to the hon. Member's Question, I may state in the first place that His Majesty's Government have not adhered to the Brussels Convention on behalf of the Crown Colonies, including Bermuda, and that those colonies are therefore under no obligation to penalise bounty-fed sugar; and secondly, that full information as to the legislation of Bermuda regarding sugar has been duly laid before the Permanent Commission, and that the engagements entered into under the Convention on behalf of the colony are being scrupulously observed.

Transvaal Labour Ordinance—Public Opinion in the Transvaal.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if, in view of the fact that the mine-owners of Johannesburg could, with the approval of the Transvaal Government, import as many Chinamen as they wished into the country, he will delay giving effect to the importation of indentured labour until further information is available as to why this arrangement would not meet the necessity of the case.

*MR. LYTTELTON: I have to refer the hon. Member to the published Papers which show that the public opinion of the Transvaal is opposed to the introduction of Chinese labourers except under indenture for work in the mines.

Indentured Indian Immigrants as Landowners.

MR. WALLACE (Perth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, if he will state in what British Colonies indentured Indian immigrants are prohibited from buying land.

*MR. LYTTELTON: I am not aware that indentured Indian immigrants are expressly prohibited by law from buying land in the Colonies to which such immigration is directed.

Repatriation of Indian Immigrants.

MR. WALLACE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will state in what British Colony indentured Indian labourers are compelled to return to their country of origin at the end of their indentures.

*MR. LYTTELTON: In Natal there is modified compulsion to return.

Lord Milner's Powers—Permits to British Subjects.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies has Lord Milner power to prohibit any British subject from entering the Transvaal; if so, is his power limited by any conditions, or is it exercised at his own uncontrolled discretion without appeal;

and does it extend to Orange River Colony; whence is this power derived, and in how many cases has it been exercised since the conclusion of the South African War; and will His Majesty's Government consider the propriety of making such arrangements as will enable British subjects to have the same rights of access to all South African Colonies as they have to the rest of His Majesty's dominions beyond the seas.

*Mr. LYTTELTON: The power in question is regulated in the Transvaal by the Peace Preservation Ordinances printed as an appendix to Cd. 1896 which is published to-day. Similar legislation exists in the Orange River Colony. I cannot say in how many cases permits have been refused to British subjects since the end of the war. Having regard to recent experience I am not satisfied that the time has yet arrived for the amendment of the present law; but it is proposed later on to enact in substitution for the present system legislation on the lines of the Natal and Cape Immigration Restriction Acts.

Wages for Chinese Labourers in the Transvaal.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Perthshire, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether there will be any provision in the regulations to be made under the authority of the Transvaal Draft Ordinance fixing a minimum wage for imported Chinese labourers on similar conditions to the minimum wage fixed by the Trinidad Ordinance relating to imported Indian labourers; and whether there will be any similar limitation of the hours of labour for time work and task work respectively.

*Mr. LYTTELTON: It is not proposed to fix a minimum wage under the Ordinance, and after taking advice of very experienced persons I do not consider that it is necessary to do so. The hon. Member will see from the draft contract in the Papers published this morning that the period of labour will be ten hours.

*Mr. BUCHANAN: But is it not the practice to fix the minimum wage?

*Mr. LYTTELTON: Different circumstances apply to different people.

Gold Output of the Transvaal.

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will state what is the present annual rate of gold production in the Transvaal, based on the most recent monthly return; and what was the value of gold actually produced in the year of maximum yield.

*Mr. LYTTELTON: The value of the gold output for the Transvaal for February, 1904, is given as £1,229,726. This would give an output for twelve months at the rate of £14,756,712. The value of gold actually produced in the nine months of 1899 was £14,093,363, or at the rate of £18,791,150 a year for 1899, or taking the month of greatest production—August—at the rate of over £20,000,000 a year.

British Consular Representation at the St. Louis Exhibition.

Mr. MALCOLM (Suffolk, Stowmarket): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will take steps to increase the Consular representation of Great Britain at St. Louis before and during the forthcoming exhibition, with a view to assisting British trade.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Earl Percy, Kensington, S.): A Royal Commission has been appointed with an office and staff at St. Louis for the purpose of assisting British trade at the exhibition, and in view of this fact there does not appear any ground for temporarily increasing the staff of the Vice-Consulate.

Mr. MALCOLM: I hope my noble friend will be able to assure the House and the country that Great Britain will be as well represented in its Consular service as any other country.

Macedonian Gendarmerie.

Sir MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbrightshire): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will lay upon the Table the demands formulated by General di Georgis, and presented to the Porte by the Austrian and Russian Ambassadors on 1st March, with reference to the Macedonian gendarmerie; and whether he can state the present position of the negotiations.

EARL PERCY: Negotiations are progressing with an improved prospect of speedy settlement, but it would be contrary to precedent and inconvenient to lay before Parliament portions of a diplomatic correspondence while the question is still under discussion.

SIR MARK STEWART: Is it intended to press for an immediate settlement?

EARL PERCY: Yes, Sir.

Indian Competitive Examinations for the Public Services.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to a Resolution issued by the Government of India announcing that competitive examinations in India for the public services will be replaced by the selection of candidates; and whether he will lay Papers showing the grounds upon which this change has been affected; and whether he will state whether the change has the approval of His Majesty's Government.

EARL PERCY: My right hon. friend the Secretary of State for India has requested me to say that he is aware of the Resolution to which the hon. Member's Question refers. He expects to receive before long the Papers giving in full the grounds on which the Government of India decided to make a change in the method of recruitment for the public service, affecting at present, as he is informed, some ten or twelve appointments, and he will then consider whether they can be laid on the Table. The principle of the proposed change was considered by him in Council, and was adopted with his consent.

Barmaids in Burma.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he has given his approval to the Bill recently passed by the Burma Legislative Council prohibiting the employment of women as barmaids in Burma; and whether it is now proposed to enact similar legislation in Bombay and other parts of India.

EARL PERCY: My right hon. friend the Secretary of State for India has requested me to say that he has not heard that the Bill referred to has yet been passed by the Burma Legislative Council. It follows, however, the principle of an Act passed last year by the Bengal Legislature, which is in operation. The hon. Member was informed by his predecessor, the Secretary of State for India, on the 6th of July last year, that, in the opinion of the Government of Bombay, legislation was not required in that Presidency, as the necessary control could be exercised by refusing licenses, and that the Government of India did not propose to press them to make any change in the law. No proposals to legislate in other provinces have been made.

Income-Tax Inquiry.

MR. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has yet appointed a Committee to inquire into the Income-Tax, as promised by his predecessor; and, if so, of whom the Committee is composed, and what are the branches of the subject into which they are to inquire.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.): The subject has been engaging my attention, and I hope to be able to announce the terms of the reference and the composition of the Committee (which I have already expressed my intention of appointing) shortly after Easter.

Licensed Premises owned by the Church.

MR. BELL (Derby): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state how many public houses and other properties licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquors are owned by the Church of England or the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; how many are leased to brewery companies; and how many to individual tenants, and the annual amount of rent.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): The information desired by the hon. Member is not available, and I have no means of making an inquiry respecting the property of benefices and other ecclesiastical corporations. But I may refer the hon. Member to Returns on the subject made to the House of Lords in 1883 and the House of Commons in 1901, showing that as regards their own estates it is the policy of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to reduce the number of licensed houses thereon as far as practicable.

Metropolitan Police—Rent Aid.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can state the date upon which the extension of the rent-aid allowance to all the married constables and sergeants of the Metropolitan Police Force will come into operation.

*MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS: It is proposed to put the new scheme of rent aid for the Metropolitan Police into force from the 4th April.

Boy Labour in London.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case of London County Council v. Rorke, heard before Mr. Bros, on 9th September last, in which the magistrate imposed a fine of 1s. upon a coffee house keeper for employing a boy ninety-four hours a week; and whether he will initiate legislation to increase the minimum penalty which may be exacted in such cases.

*MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS: My attention had not previously been called to this case; and the magistrate, on being consulted, states that he cannot at this distance of time recall the circumstances in which the fine was inflicted. I have no evidence that inadequate fines are inflicted in the Metropolitan Police Courts for offences under the Shop Hours Acts, and I am not prepared to introduce the legislation suggested by the hon. Member.

Exports of Steam Coal to Russia and Japan.

SIR LEES KNOWLES (Salford, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he will state the amount of steam coal exported from Great Britain to Russia and Japan, respectively, during last year and in each of the months of this year.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): The quantity of steam coal exported to Russia during 1903 was 2,045,480 tons, and to Japan 118,921 tons. During the month of January, 1904, 30,848 tons were exported to Russia, and 21,532 tons to Japan, and during February, 1904, 14,032 tons to Russia, and 39,027 tons to Japan.

SIR LEES KNOWLES: Is there any differentiation between smokeless and other coal?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I think not.

Cuban Sugar Imports.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): I beg to ask the President to the Board of Trade under what head in the monthly trade statistics are the imports of sugar from Cuba shown; and whether he can arrange to have them separately indicated.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The imports of sugar from Cuba are included in the monthly trade statistics under the head of "Other Countries." Arrangements have been made to distinguish them separately for the future.

Emigration Returns.

*GENERAL LAURIE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): I beg to ask the President to the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the inaccuracy in the Emigration Returns, due to the fact that all passengers carried to an Atlantic port in the United States are shown as emigrants to that country, although a large number are known to be destined for Western Canada; and whether he can arrange that more accurate information shall be furnished;

or, if the present record is in accordance with the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, whether he can take steps to obtain an amendment of the Act in this particular.

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The point raised has frequently come under my notice. The Returns published by the Board of Trade are not inaccurate, as they give what they profess to give, viz., the countries in which passengers contract to land. There is no power under the Merchant Shipping Act to require the shipping companies to supply information as to the ultimate destination of passengers, and the practical difficulties of securing accurate information on this point, even if fresh legislation were enacted for the purpose, would be very great. The matter, however, will not be lost sight of.

***General LAURIE**: Would it not be possible to obtain fuller information from the companies as to the ultimate destination of passengers who hold through tickets?

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I am afraid I have no power to require it, and I do not know that it would be very useful.

Glanders.

Captain NORTON: I beg to ask the hon. Member for North Huntingdonshire, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether it has been brought to his notice that the number of people dying from glanders contracted from horses has increased, thus causing additional risk to veterinary surgeons and others; and whether he will consider the advisability of taking steps to make it illegal for anyone to manufacture or import malline unless licensed by the Government.

Mr. AILWYN FELLOWES (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey): The regulation of the manufacture and importation of malline as suggested would be attended with considerable practical difficulties, and legislation would be requisite. My noble friend would, however, be glad to receive and to consider any information on the subject which may be laid before him. The deaths from glanders have happily been only two, four, and five, respectively, during the last three years, and we are informed by the Registrar-General that there has been no increase in the number of deaths from that disease during the past twenty years.

Orkney Fisheries.

Mr. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Commissioners of Wood and Forests, whether, in view of the fact that the lease of certain fishings in Orkney was only for a term of two years, and that within that period the lessee could purchase, subject to regulations to be approved by the Secretary for Scotland, for the due protection of the public rights to free fair rod fishing in the sea, and, seeing that the lease has been extended for a further period of twelve months, the lessee taking advantage of such extension to advertise that the sea-fishing is strictly preserved, he will arrange that no further extension will be granted without public inquiry.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Victor Cavendish, Derbyshire, W.): A question as to the legal rights of the Crown as regards fishing for sea trout, etc., in the Orkney Islands, has been raised by a landowner; and, if this question is definitely disposed of before Martinmas next, no extension of the lease will be granted. In any case no further extension of the lease will be granted without due notice, and any representations made by persons interested will be fully considered.

Tarbert and Listowel Coach Service.

Mr. LUNDON (Limerick, E.): On behalf of the hon. Member for North Kerry, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the cost of the coach service between Listowel and Tarbert is between £700 and £800 per year, and that a satisfactory service can be arranged locally for £300 per annum; and, if so, whether he will reconsider the question of continuing the present service under new arrangements, thereby saving a considerable sum of money each year, as well as giving facilities to the local people to attend the markets.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): The expenditure on this service has averaged £724 a year; the receipts have averaged £151. The nett loss in working the service to the end of 1903 has amounted to £4,022. It has not been used to any considerable extent by the people of the locality, notwithstanding the special inducements held out by the offer of cheap tickets during the winter months on market and fair days. The Government cannot reconsider the decision already arrived at.

Fair Rent Cases in County Roscommon.

MR. JAMES O'KELLY, (Roscommon, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the application of Mr. Thomas Brady, of Lisserdrea, Boyle, county Roscommon, to have a fair rent fixed has been pending for the last four years; and, if so, whether he will ask the Land Commission to expedite the hearing of fair rent applications in the Boyle District.

MR. WYNDHAM: A fair rent has been fixed in this case, but an appeal was lodged. The appeal will be heard at the next sitting of the Commissioners at Castlerea.

Mr. Parnell's Birthplace.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Wexford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what the Department of Agriculture propose to do with Avondale House, now that they have purchased the property to form a forestry school; and whether, in view of the fact that Avondale House was the birthplace of the late Mr. Parnell, the house will be preserved as a national relic.

MR. WYNDHAM: The Departments in any use it may make of Avondale House, will have due regard for it, historic associations.

Knocalassa Farm, County Sligo.

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the grazing farm of Knocalassa, situate near Riverstown, county Sligo, which forms portion of an estate administered in the Land Judge's Court, will, under the operation of the Act of 1903, be available for the enlargement of the small holdings surrounding it.

MR. WYNDHAM: The farm in question is no longer under the administration or control of the Land Judge. It was sold, I am informed, before the passing of the Act of 1903.

Labourers' Cottages in Ireland.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will grant the Return standing on to-day's Notice Paper dealing with Labourers' Cottages (Ireland).

MR. WYNDHAM: I shall be happy to give the Return provided the hon. Member will alter the dates in Columns (10) and (14) to 31st March, 1904. It would be most troublesome to obtain the information in respect of the period to 21st March.

The Return is as follows:—Return in respect of Labourers' Cottages in Ireland, showing:—(1) County; (2) Rural District; (3) Valuation of Rural District; (4) Number of Labourers' Cottages (a) built, (b) in course of construction; (5) Amount of Loans (a) sanctioned, (b) received; (6) Amount required to be raised annually in repayment of Loans sanctioned; (7) Amount which would be raised by the maximum rate of one shilling in the pound allowed for purposes of Acts; (8) Rate per pound required to raise amount specified in Column 6; (9) Present poundage rate levied on Rural District for Labourers Acts purposes; (10) Amount of Exchequer Contribution for the year ended 21st day of March, 1904; (11) Amount of rent received from tenants of cottages and plots during year; (12) Unissued balance, if any, of County's share of Exchequer Contribution; (13) Totals per County and Province, and for all Ireland; (14) the Return to be made up to the 21st day of March, 1904 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 198, of Session 1903).

Evicted Farm in Queen's County.

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the farm at Knockaroo, Queen's County, from which the late Malachi Kelly was evicted in 1880 for non-payment of one year's rent, and which remained untenanted up to the introduction of the Land Bill last session, has been let to a tenant within the past year; and whether, in view of the fact that the evicted tenant's widow, Mrs. Kelly, claims reinstatement under the Land Act, 1903, the Estates Commissioners will sanction an advance for purchase to the present occupier.

Mr. WYNDHAM: There is no application before the Estates Commissioners for the purchase of the estate containing the farm referred to. But in such event the question of sanctioning an advance in respect of a newly created tenancy, as well as the claims of evicted tenants, will be carefully considered.

Trinity College Leases.

Mr. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the terms of reference to the Commission of Inquiry into the subject of Trinity College leases in relation to land purchase; and whether he has any communication to make to the House as to the form and composition of such Commission.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The terms of reference are still under consideration. Until they have been settled, I have no statement to make in respect of the proposed Commission.

Threatening Notices in Galway.

Mr. DUFFY (Galway, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland on how many occasions since his occupation of the house and lands at Carnakelly, from which Michael Haniffy was evicted, has ex-sergeant Timothy Hansbery reported to the police that he had received threatening letters or notices; what were the nature of the inquiries instituted by the police to trace the writer of these letters or notices, and with what result.

Mr. WYNDHAM: Two such notices were posted up. Neither of them was reported to the police, who found them. The police made every effort to trace the writers of the notices, but without success.

Irish Language in Irish Schools.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the National Education Board, Ireland, have withdrawn the circular dealing with the teaching of Irish as an extra in Irish schools.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The circular had reference to the teaching of extra subjects, of which Irish was one, outside the ordinary school hours, for which a special fee is payable. Instruction in these subjects in all national schools and in all standards during ordinary school hours, which had already been sanctioned by the Commissioners, is not in any way affected by the circular. On the 8th instant †, I explained at some length the effect of this circular as well as the intentions of the Commissioners in respect of certain matters upon which I had sought their observations. A further explanatory circular, which will remove the doubts created by that of January, is about to be issued by the Commissioners. The arrangement under which special fees will be payable hereafter for Irish appears to me to be more liberal than formerly.

Royal Irish Constabulary Inspectors.

Mr. REDDY (King's County, Birr): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the salary and allowances of the two inspectors of the Royal Irish Constabulary, two head constables in Shinrone and Birr, King's county; how many stations they have to inspect, and the total distance they should travel to inspect them all; how often they have visited each station, and how long they stayed in each station at each visit during the past twelve months.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The total pay and allowances is £878 per annum. There are five stations in the Birr District, covering a distance of forty miles; and six in the Shinrone District covering a distance of sixty-five miles. They were all very frequently inspected. It would be contrary to practice to state the duration of the visits or their number.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxxi., 460.

MR. REDDY: Is it not the fact that these two inspectors are able to perform their monthly duty in one day and spend the rest of the month in hunting?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Reduction of the Royal Irish Constabulary.

MR. REDDY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland how many constables, head constables, district inspectors, and county inspectors of the Royal Irish Constabulary have been retired; and whether, though the number of constables is to be reduced considerably, the number of highly paid inspectors with little or no duty is not to be changed.

MR. WYNDHAM: The published Estimate for the Royal Irish Constabulary shows the numbers in each of the ranks mentioned for which provision is proposed in the next, as compared with the current, financial year. Owing to the statutory rights of county and district inspectors the scheme of reduction cannot have a proportionately large effect on them as on the rank and file. But recruiting has been suspended for the present in the case of officers as well as men.

In reply to a further Question, MR. WYNDHAM said that ultimately the proportions would be adjusted.

Butson Estate, County Galway.

MR. ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any limit has been put by Mr. Justice Ross to the time within which Mrs. Butson was to purchase the grazing land on the Butson Estate, county Galway; and whether he will state the size of the substantial holdings which the grazing lands, for the distribution of which the Receiver has been directed to prepare a scheme, will give to each of the fifty-seven tenants on this estate.

MR. WYNDHAM: I am not aware that there is a time limit, as suggested, but I am making inquiry. The information desired in the second part of the Question cannot obviously be given until the scheme shall have been prepared by the Receiver and submitted to the Land Judge.

Meath Hospital Staff.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin County, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any appointments have been made to the staff of the Meath Hospital (the county Dublin infirmary) since the passing of the Local Government Act, 1898; and, if so, what appointments have been made and by whom.

MR. WYNDHAM: Two appointments have been made since the date mentioned to the position of Visiting Surgeon to this Hospital. Both appointments were made, I understand, by the Joint Committee constituted under Section 15 of the Act of 1898.

Development Grant and Harbour Dredging.

MR. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary a Question of which I have given him private notice—whether he has yet satisfied himself that the Wexford Harbour Board require the use of a powerful dredger to improve the harbour, so as to meet the requirements of the port, and what steps he proposes to take to facilitate the object the board have in view?

MR. WYNDHAM; I understand that the Wexford Harbour requires the use of a powerful dredger, and if hon. Members for Ireland agree to the application of a sum of money from the Development Grant for the employment of a dredger which can be utilised in dredging harbours on the Irish coast I will give favourable consideration to the matter. But I cannot treat with the Wexford Harbour Board separately in this matter.

Roscrea Post Office.

MR. KENDAL O'BRIEN (Tipperary, Mid.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether the house in the Square, Roscrea, county Tipperary, owned by Mr. W. J. Menton, and from which

Mr. T. M. Ryan was evicted in July, 1902, has been taken over by the postal authorities; and, if so, for what term and on what conditions; how much does the Department intend expending on the premises; is it proposed to transfer the Post Office from its present situation; what are the reasons for so doing; have the wishes of the townspeople been consulted; and for what length of time have the existing postal premises been used for such a purpose.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton): It is a fact that I have taken a lease from Mr. W. J. Menton of a house in Roscrea formerly occupied by a Mr. T. M. Ryan; but I do not know under what circumstances Mr. Ryan's tenancy was terminated. The term is for thirty, forty, or fifty years, and the rent is £50 a year. A sum of about £490 will be expended in repairing and adapting the premises. The business will be transferred to the new office as soon as it is ready for occupation. The present office, which has been in use since 1893, is not well adapted for Post Office requirements, and could not be made suitable except at disproportionate expense. There has not been any reason to suppose that there would be objection on the part of the townspeople to a step taken for the improvement of their postal accommodation.

Mr. KENDAL O'BRIEN: Arising out of that, may I ask will the noble Lord reconsider the intention of his Department to acquire these premises in view of the local feeling caused by the eviction, and that nearly a dozen persons have been sent to jail in connection with it?

Lord STANLEY: The house has already been taken for a term of years, and nothing else can be done.

Mr. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): Is the noble Lord going to recommend a public Department to encourage house grabbing in Ireland?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Treatment of Imbeciles.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he is now in the position to give further information as to the action to be taken by the Government with reference to an inquiry or Royal Commission to consider the case of imbeciles and other feeble-minded persons.

The PRIME MINISTER and FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): I understand that the Home Secretary and the President of the Local Government Board are carefully considering what course shall be taken and I hope to announce their decision in a short space of time?

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: Shall I put the Question down again in a week's time.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: If it is so put down I will do my best to answer it.

The General Election—Fiscal Policy of the Government.

Mr. BLACK (Banffshire): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Government has determined at the ensuing general election to ask the electorate to empower a Minister of the Crown to impose or to threaten, or undertake to impose, import duties of a retaliatory character without obtaining the previous assent of this House to each individual duty; and, if so, whether it is contemplated that such powers may be granted to a Minister sitting in the House of Lords, and so exempt from direct control of this House.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: If the hon. Gentleman will be kind enough to refer to the answer to a practically identical Question on the 10th March† I hope he will find satisfaction.

Mr. BLACK suggested that the Questions were not identical, as one applied to the past and the other to the future.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The answer, at any rate, applies to both.

Easter Holidays.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can now say when he proposes that the House shall adjourn for and re-assemble after Easter.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxxi., 7657.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR : I am afraid that in the present uncertain condition of public business I cannot make any announcement before Thursday next.

Russian Warships in the Red Sea.

Sir MARK STEWART: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he has any official information showing that an armed Russian cruiser and torpedo destroyers are stationed in the Red Sea off Suez; and, if so, can he say if any Peninsular and Oriental steamers carrying the Union Jack, Peninsular and Oriental, and mail flags have been stopped; if any remonstrance has been made to the Russian Government; and, if so, has any apology been tendered; and if any of His Majesty's cruisers are in the Red Sea.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR : His Majesty's Government have no information that an armed Russian cruiser and torpedo destroyers are now stationed in the Red Sea off Suez. They are informed that a Peninsular and Oriental steamer was visited and had her papers examined last month by a Russian warship in the Red Sea. The facts as at present known are insufficient to warrant a remonstrance to the Russian Government. None of His Majesty's cruisers are at present in the Red Sea.

Sale of Butter Bill.

Mr. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether it is intended to proceed with the Sale of Butter Bill this session; and, if so, when it is proposed to take the Second Reading.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY: At the same time may I also ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he can state when the Second Reading of the Sale of Butter Bill will be taken.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR : My noble friend the President of the Board of Agriculture proposes to reintroduce this Bill; but I cannot fix the date for the Second Reading, and am afraid it is extremely doubtful whether it can be taken before Easter.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY: May I remind the right hon. Gentleman that the Bill has been read a first time already.

Licensing Bill.

Sir WILFRID LAWSON (Cornwall. Camborne): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can now give a date for the introduction of the promised Government Licensing Bill.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot as yet fix a date for the introduction of the Licensing Bill.

Sir WILFRID LAWSON: Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether the Bill will be introduced before or after Easter?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am unable to pledge myself on that point until I see how business goes.

The Submarine Disaster.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can give the House any information with reference to the melancholy disaster to Submarine A1, in addition to that which has already been published.

Mr. PRETYMAN: There is no further information. All the information available has been at once sent to the Press. There is no doubt whatever that the accident occurred through the collision of the "Berwick Castle" with the submarine. This is the latest telegram from the Commander-in-Chief:—"As the exposed position of the wreck of the submarine prevents the usual lifting operations being carried out, it has been decided to adopt the course of first repairing and then floating her by forcing out the water by the agency of compressed air, and a contract has been accordingly made with the Neptune Salvage Company to do this work, which it is hoped will be successfully accomplished in the course of a few days, and the work was begun this afternoon. The wrecked submarine is now lying nearly upright with a list of about 10deg. to port, the "Berwick Castle" having struck her on her starboard beam, and apparently the chief damage is at the conning tower, which was struck by the

"Berwick Castle," as the marks of the collision with that vessel are plainly marked at this part of the hull, and the paint has all been scraped off the starboard side of the conning tower of the submarine." No additional information can be obtained until the salvage operations have been completed.

The Plague in Johannesburg.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it is true that the plague has broken out at Johannesburg and in a few hours there have been thirty deaths, and whether, if that is so, the Government will not put into operation the Chinese Labour Ordinance until the plague has been stamped out.

*MR. LYTTELTON: I have received a telegram from Lord Milner, just before I came into the House, which shows that the hon. Member's information is correct. The fact that cases of plague have occurred will not be lost sight of by Lord Milner in dealing with the question of putting the Ordinance into operation.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask, is the right hon. Gentleman aware that Asiatics are peculiarly subject to the plague?

*MR. LYTTELTON: Professor Simpson, who has had great experience of the plague, has kindly offered his services, and will at once proceed to the Transvaal to take any steps that may be necessary.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): Can the right hon. Gentleman say what will be the course of business this week?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: To-morrow and Wednesday I hope to finish the Report of the Supplementary Estimates, and to pass Committee and Report stages of the Ways and Means Resolution, on which the further stages of the Consolidated Fund Bill are founded. It will be necessary to pass the Committee and Report stages of the Telegraph Money Bill. Unless they are passed, there will be serious discharges of working men, and great inconvenience and considerable suffering also. On Thursday I hope to be able to take the Second Reading of the Consolidated Fund Bill.

NEW BILL.

FRANCHISE AND REMOVAL OF WOMAN'S DISABILITIES (No. 2) BILL.

"To establish a single Franchise at all Elections and thereby to abolish University Representation, and to remove the Disabilities of Women," presented by Sir Charles Dilke; supported by Mr. Bell, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Keir Hardie, Mr. Atherley-Jones, Mr. Logan, Dr. Macnamara, Captain Norton, Mr. Shackleton, and Mr. Sheehan; to be read a second time upon Friday, 10th June, and to be printed. [Bill 133.]

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (EXEMPTION FROM THE STANDING ORDER).

Ordered, That the proceedings on the Motion relating to Chinese Labour (Transvaal), if under discussion at Twelve o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House).—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

CHINESE LABOUR FOR THE TRANSVAAL.—VOTE OF CENSURE.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): The Motion which stands in my name is avowedly a vote of censure upon His Majesty's Ministers. His Majesty's Ministers during recent years, using the power obtained amid the war fever in 1900, have done many strange and unexpected things, which I shall not pause to recall, and they have also, stretching their hand into the future, indicated a movement in directions which would involve fresh and mischievous novelty. But I doubt whether anything that they have done or said has been so great a surprise to the country, so great an infraction of established policy, or has moved so deeply the intimate sentiment of great masses of the people as their sanctioning of this Transvaal Labour Ordinance. The gravity of this step is, of course, greatly enhanced by the fact that in present circumstances the Imperial Parliament stands, as it were, in the place of trustee for the voteless and voiceless inhabitants of that colony. Had they with full constitutional representative authority put forward this measure and submitted it for the sanction of the Crown we might have thought they were in error, we might have disagreed with them and regretted their action, but we should have had to acknowledge that in their own affairs, and in their own House, it was not very easy or proper to interfere directly with them. But now, while they have no self-government, it is upon the Imperial Government and upon the Imperial Parliament, and, if we assent to the action of the Imperial Government, upon us, that the responsibility rests for a new departure, which may, if not checked, irretrievably influence for evil not only the future of the colony itself, but the whole district of the world in which it lies. To import aliens from without the Empire and to make them bondsmen under degrading conditions for the mere purpose of benefiting, not the whole community into which they are introduced, but a wealthy industry and the speculators in that industry—can any one conceive a more flagrant denial on all points of the principles of freedom and equity by adherence to which we have gained our place in the world? I do not shrink, Mr. Speaker, from saying that, if I thought our countrymen would accept and regard this measure which has been sprung upon them as a permanent part of the law and policy of the new colony, I should conclude that our countrymen had lost, and that they deserved to have lost, the proud place which the wise and just and humane and Christian men who have preceded us have through generations procured for us in the world. I, therefore, by this Motion call upon the House to stop this measure in its early stages, in which it can be dealt with.

The House knows the view of this matter taken by the Party on this side of the House and by thousands of persons in the country, and I will not, therefore, occupy time in stating it beyond the few words that I have already uttered. But I will proceed to inquire into the occasion and the excuses that are urged for this new policy. Sir, if such a step as the Government have taken can be tolerated at all we have to inquire—Does the condition of the mining industry in the Transvaal justify it? I must make, I am afraid, a brief excursion into past history, and here I must at once say that Parliament and the country have not been fairly treated by the Government in this matter. Under what impression did the Government leave the House of Commons at the end of last session? We had two notable speeches in the course of that session from the Secretary of State for the Colonies. On 19th March he used these words—

> "I say that there was considerable indignation expressed at the proposal for the introduction of Asiatic or Chinese labour. Let me say, in the first place, that no such proposal was made, so far as I know, or is likely to be made. Every one concerned in the matter, even those who take the most pessimistic view of the future, is agreed that every other possible source of supply must be exhausted" [MINISTERIAL cheers] "before the introduction of Asiatic or Chinese labour is even thought of. At the present moment, as every one knows, colonial people throughout South Africa are, by a very large majority, against any such proposal. Why, then, should the House of Commons intervene to beat itself against an open door, to teach our Colonists what they ought to do and to interfere with the rights which we have conceded to the self-governing communities?"

Those words were pretty plain, and on 27th July the right hon. Gentleman confirmed this view and elaborated it. He said—

> "As regards Chinese labour I will only say that it is really a premature question. The right hon. Gentleman—"

that is my right. hon. friend the Member for West Monmouth, who had stated that the mine-owners had said they could not conduct their industry unless they were allowed to do so with the assistance of Chinese labour—

> "The right hon. Gentleman relies on the little paragraphs which he sees in the newspapers. At present no suggestion of the kind has been made to me, and, so far as I know, no suggestion about Chinese labour has been brought personally to the notice of the Transvaal Government."

What are the facts? They show that the Colonial Office must be very imperfectly informed. I will only mention two main facts. On 1st April, nearly four months earlier, Sir George Farrar, a member of the Legislative Council, and one of the leading men in the mining community, made a speech advocating the introduction of indentured Asiatic labour—a speech which made an immense sensation throughout South Africa and was taken as an open declaration of the mineowners' intention. It appears in the Blue-book. Then, on 2nd June, a deputation of what is called the White League—an organisation formed to oppose the demand for Chinese labour—was received by Lord Milner. What was his reply to them? He did not, in so many words, commit himself to Chinese labour, but he advocated the regulated use of Asiatic labour. He said that if they were to go ahead it was a question of getting more white labour or Asiatic labour—an alternative which we only wish had been more fully weighed. Lord Milner adopted in anticipation the findings of the Labour Commission, arguing that there was no additional supply of native labour adequate to the demand. It is rather a balancing speech, but the scale distinctly inclines towards importation. Two significant observations were made by Lord Milner. This statement was this—

> "We have not so far the slightest certainty that the people whose rumoured advent so greatly disturbs some of us would be prepared to come. The Asiatic labourers may not care to go to a country where they have at least some reason for thinking that they will meet with a very unfriendly reception, or if the labourers themselves were willing to risk it, their Governments might refuse to let them."

and then he goes on—

> "The Indian Government, for one, has already declined to consider a proposal for the introduction of Indian miners into Rhodesia, and has given as one of its reasons that it cannot feel certain that they would be properly treated there."

Let me pause in the middle of my quotation to ask how we are to reconcile this statement of Lord Milner's with the positive answer given by the Secretary of State for India a few days ago to the effect that no communication whatever had passed between the Indian Government on the subject.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. LYTTELTON, Warwick and Leamington): No.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Yes. Surely, the little difference is not to be drawn between the Transvaal and Rhodesia? Surely, we have had enough of these little differences in dates, in names of documents, and so forth, which are made the means of giving answers which, on being thoroughly explored, do not convey the facts as fully as they ought to have been conveyed. Surely, at any rate, Lord Milner uses it for Transvaal purposes?

MR. LYTTELTON: What is the date of that?

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: 2nd June, 1903. It cannot be pleaded that Rhodesia is one thing and that the Transvaal is another. [HON. MEMBERS: Why not?] Because, as I say, Lord Milner himself will not accept that plea, because he gives the case of Rhodesia as a complete answer to the case of the Transvaal. Having noticed that, I go on—

> "We have not only to consider the Indian Government, but the home Government. The home Government will not agree to our introducing indentured Asiatic labour if they think the mass of the European population are dead against it."

In this quotation are three hypotheses. In the first place, India certainly would not agree to the recruiting of coolies. Next, China and the Chinese coolie himself might object to come; and the third is that the home Government might veto the proposal if they think the people of the Transvaal objected. Thus, though no formal suggestion had then been made to the Transvaal Government for the importation of the Chinese, here, at all events, is the Governor fully occupied with the matter, receiving a deputation on the subject, and proceeding to argue the thing with them. Why, then, were we led to believe that interest in the question in this House and in the country was idle and premature? The second statement to which I have referred and to which the attention of the House should be called is this—

> "To listen to some of the extreme advocates of Asiatic labour you would think that this place was on the verge of total ruin. What is the real case? The production of gold even now is greater than in 1895 or 1896, when the Transvaal already was, and had been for some time past, the marvel of the world in the matter of gold production. The world progresses no doubt, but what was fabulous wealth seven years ago is not abject poverty now."

Lord Milner is nothing if not rhetorical—

> "Not only that, but the rate of production is steadily increasing. It was 217,000 oz. in

March, 227,000 oz. in April, and it is likely to be 250,000 for May."

So far Lord Milner. But let us follow up this question of the output of the mines. The December output was 286,000 oz., of the value of £1,215,000, representing an annual output at that rate of £14,580,000, or only £560,000 short of the result of 1898, the year before the war. Yet at the end of this month of December and at the beginning of this year we have from Lord Milner profoundly alarming reports. How are we to reconcile this with his rebuke, which I have quoted, of the disappointment and deeply-coloured statements which the mine-owners were circulating in the spring? Surely if it was wrong to fall into a panic when the mines had got back to the position of 1896 there is nothing on the face of it to show cause for the measures now proposed—measures which are justified only on the ground that they are necessary to avert a positive catastrophe—when the output is within an ace of what it was in 1898. The surprising thing is, not that progress in the mines has not come up to the optimistic expectations that were practically unbounded; but, what with the war and its disturbing effect on the Kaffirs, and in face of the sweeping reduction in wages which took place during the war, the wonder is that it has been as great as it has been. At all events, however this may be, when the House rose it was not given the remotest reason to suppose that a desperate state of things in the mining industry was impending. Quite the contrary. It rose under the spell of the Aladdin and Monte Cristo speeches and stories of the late Colonial Secretary, fresh from South Africa. Matters were going so well, in fact, that the new colonies would be able, without inconvenience, to pay the interest on the debt of £65,000,000, with which His Majesty's Government had merrily started them on their new career. The disappointment that has taken place has been in the financial condition of the Transvaal itself. Undoubtedly there is distress in the Transvaal; but I have quoted figures enough to show—and the more recent figures bear out the same result—that there is no reason for despair, or even for gloomy anticipations, in the case of the mines themselves. I ask—was it treating the House and the country fairly to thrust this proposal upon us at the point of the bayonet the moment Parliament met, and then to say that we must content ourselves with such oblique discussion as we could manage to obtain on the Address?

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): Oblique?

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Yes, oblique; I think it is rather a good phrase. If ever there was a case in which the onus of proof rested on those who advocate a great change it is this case. And what is the evidence that has been presented to us? Assuming that the system proposed was morally justifiable—which I admit for the purposes of argument, though I cannot from any other point of view—there are two heads on which decisive evidence should have been forthcoming. First of all, proof of the absolute want of labour, exhaustion of the native labour, impracticability of the use of white labour impracticability also of developing labour-saving appliances. That is the first thing. And the second thing of which we ought to have had conclusive testimony is that the inhabitants, and notably and above all the permanent inhabitants, both Dutch and British, were in approval of the importation of Chinese. Now, is the House satisfied on these two points from the evidence we have received? I will not go into details, but there are one or two salient facts which stand out from the information, rather grudgingly furnished I think, at least in slow instalments. First of all, as to native labour; we have upon that the testimony of no less a person than the late Colonial Secretary. The late Colonial Secretary told us in last July that he considered a fatal mistake had been made in reducing the wages. What was the effect of that reduction? Not only that the men themselves were disappointed, and that the inducement was lessened, but that men having gone there on the faith and in the expectation of receiving the old rate of wages, and being paid only the new rate, have lost faith in any statements that may now be made, and if you now tell them they will receive the old rate they say, in their own language, "Once bitten, twice shy." The next thing that the late Colonial Secretary told us was that there was an abundant number of Kaffirs available in the country, although there was a shortage at the mines. The next thing he told us was that such shortage as there was, was largely due to the lack of consideration shown for the comfort and happiness of the workers by those in charge of the mines. Why, I might almost stop there, as far as black labour is concerned, because that seems to me to destroy, by these three admissions, the whole case. Then, secondly, we have the evidence of the Boers before the Committee to the same effect, and we have the strong and reiterated declarations on the part of the Cape Ministry, who surely know something about South Africa, even beyond the limits of the colony, that the conclusions of the Committee were valueless and that labour adequate to all reasonable requirements was available. Then the third point I will name as standing out is, that so far as this Committee or Commission was concerned, much of the evidence was interested evidence, and the whole of it was adjudicated upon by a tribunal which no stretch of language could speak of as being impartial, because a substantial majority of the members were connected with the actual mining interest. Then, lastly, I would mention that by its term of reference that Commission was precluded from taking evidence or gathering information as to the importation of Chinese; and with regard to the question of alternate methods which might supersede the necessity for a great deal of labour, that is not even alluded to in their Report.

So much for black labour. Let us now return to white labour. I say at once that I have no pretension to teach people their business, or to instruct mining experts in the management of mines; but we are entitled to indicate the directions in which ordinary business men would expect a full trial to be made before a great revolution, such as this, in the social condition of the country was effected. Some improvement in the condition of labour usually arises from one of two causes; either from broad views of public interest commending themselves, or from the national conscience being aroused, as we have seen it in many cases in this country; or it may rise from the difficulty of obtaining labour, which stimulates ingenuity. As long as what they call muscular machinery can be got at a cheap rate there will be no great effort made to spare it; men will not spend money and exert their ingenuity in that case, and all industries would be in the primitive and almost prehistoric stage if abundance of cheap uncontrolled labour was available. Now, what are the possibilities of gold mining? Is there room for improvements which would dispense with a great deal of unskilled labour? Here, again, let me disclaim any attempt on my part to dogmatise or express an opinion, because I am not qualified to form one on such a subject. I would merely say that surely something should be tried before this terrible plunge is made. But I am not without authorities. I invite attention to two passages. One was quoted already in the previous debate by my hon. friend the Member for Cleveland; it is from a speech by Mr. Eckstein, who, I should think, knows something about it, at a meeting in Johannesburg—

> "It is not yet entirely satisfactory, I admit; we all acknowledge the case to be in some respects unsatisfactory for the machine drill. But the experience is a comparatively recent one. We are improving all the time, and I think we may reasonably look forward to the introduction of a small spoke drill which will aid us immensely in solving our labour difficulties,"

and he went on to say that—

> "by the development of the machine drill we can get down our native labour to a very large extent—50,000 or 60,000 natives."

That is Mr. Eckstein, but I have almost a higher authority than Mr. Eckstein. What do you say—I mention his name almost with breathless awe—to the Johannesburg correspondent of *The Times*? Here is what he says, and I think if the House has patience to listen to it, they will find it most apposite to the case. Of course he is arguing in favour of Chinese labour, and he says that a certain class can be got from Northern China and a certain class from Southern China, and he goes on—

> "Should both sources prove inadequate, the country will at least have had the satisfaction of having given the experiment a fair trial, and will have proved that neither in Kaffir or in Chinese labour is salvation for the mining industry to be sought. In that day the star of the advocates of white labour will be in the ascendant,

and the energy now thrown by the industry into the acquisition of Chinamen will have to be transferred to developing a scheme for attracting a large white population to the mines. That this could be done there seems little doubt; while, if the need were there, the ingenuity of the mining experts of the Rand should be equal to devising the necessary improvements in the machinery of the mines to counteract the enhanced cost of the labour." "There is a tendency to imagine that the last phase in the perfection of mining plant and the treatment of the ore has been reached on the Rand; there could be no greater fallacy."

I think I have honestly disclaimed for myself any right to have an opinion, but I have adduced two opinions which, I think, are unimpeachable, and I think they are most satisfactory to those who had before them this view of the question—that it was, at all events, possible that machinery might be improved on the Rand, as it has been in every other part of the world, and that white labour might be more used.

But then objection is taken to white labour by influential mine-owners on political and other grounds—they fear the voting power of enfranchised British settlers. It is a pity they did not think of that before the war. Then they were busy circulating memorials among the miners, and putting themselves at the head of the movement for the franchise. If any one on this side of this House had at that time anticipated the doctrine now entertained in the highest circles of Johannesburg, what name would have been too hard for us? But with some people the rule is to shout for the Uitlanders when they are against Mr. Kruger, and to vote for them to-day when they wrap themselves in his mantle. Whether they are fighting a corrupt oligarchy, or engaged in starting a reform, even an expensive one, does not seem to matter. And yet one would really have thought that these gentlemen on the Rand, whatever their nationality, might have stretched a point in the British man's favour; after all he has done and suffered for them, they might have had some consideration for him. If to give him the franchise was going too far in the direction of equal rights for white men, surely they might at least have allowed him the chance of showing that he could work? Could not the Government have put in a word for the British workman? We know that anything that increases employment is dear to their heart; we know what they think of the miserable alien who takes the bread out of the mouth of Englishmen. We recall the terms of their war prospectus—it was to be a miners' war, there were to be new openings, fresh fields of labour, smiling homes for British families, as soon as a semi-barbarous civilisation and an effete form of Government had made way for the higher ideals! Where is their valour and where is their rectitude that they have not a word to say for the British workman now that he is to be snuffed out by the Chinaman? Sir, this is the biggest scheme of human dumping since the Middle Passage was abolished. Where are the economic convictions of the Government that they not only sanction, but actually base themselves upon, the wholesale importation of destitute Asiatic natives as the one means of saving South Africa from ruin? This is to be the constitution of society in the new Colonies: capitalists at the head, mostly aliens and non-resident, and, below them, Chinese labour. A pretty organisation for society in a British Colony! I know that a reference to conscience may be nauseous to some hon. Gentlemen opposite. But what is this exploitation of the Chinese from first to last but one conscienceless and nauseous proceeding? If British men would not do, there is always India. But India knows how badly Asiatics are likely to fare in the Transvaal, where at the present moment the Indian is deprived of his British citizenship, and has less cause to be proud of living under the protection of the British flag than the Frenchman or the German. What sort of patriotism, what sort of Imperialism, is it that thus effaces itself at a signal from Johannesburg?

It is asserted, indeed, that by importing the Chinaman you will enlarge the field of white labour. The unskilled Chinaman the skilled white man—that is the expectation. But all the information which I have received shows that the Chinaman will not work under white superintendents; he must have his own Chinese superintendents; and then, as Chinese superintendents are cheaper than white superintendents, the next thing we will hear is that the mines cannot be worked if the superintendents also are not yellow. Or is it meant that these Chinamen will give employment to a large number of whites because of the money they will spend? What a ludicrous conception! These Chinamen are most thrifty; they have few wants, and most of their wages will go back with them to China. If their wages will go back with them to China, how can it be said that they will spend money in the Transvaal? Another count in the indictment against British workmen being employed in the mines is that they have an ugly habit of combining. The mine-owners have signified that they do not want another Australia in South Africa, and by falling back upon the Chinaman they hope to get rid of the trail of trades unionism. That is calling in the old world to redress the balance of the new. Cheap and abundant labour, unenfranchised labour, labour incapable of combination—these are the three essentials that the mine-owners require in their workers; and, as the Kaffir is too dear, as the British workman suffers from the same liability, and has, besides, a stubborn and ineradicable taste for freedom and citizenship, the mine-owners have fallen back upon the Chinaman. That is the genesis of this Transvaal Ordinance. We say that this policy involves the negation of all the social, economic, and political principles which have given us and our Colonies our position in the world. We say that it ought never to have been adopted, and that, having been formally passed into law, it ought not, and shall not if we can help it, be put into operation. That is the reason why I bring forward my Motion. [A CONSERVATIVE MEMBER: Will you revoke it?] Being a Scotchman, I reply to that question by asking another. Will you put me in power?

We know that opinion on the spot is against this Ordinance. Dutch and other opponents of the importation of Chinese labour were not allowed to express their opinion before the Commission. There was no inquiry, no *referendum*, no authoritative expression of opinion. On the other hand, criticising pressmen were parted with, criticising officials were dismissed, and a meeting called in Johannesburg for the purpose of asking for a *referendum* on the question was broken up by hired roughs. I invite the House to read in the Blue-book the minutes and despatches of the Cape Ministers on the subject. In a minute of 17th August they refer to a resolution unanimously passed by the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council in July against Chinese importation, and proceed to set out their objections to it. First, that it was most undesirable to introduce another coloured race into South Africa; secondly, that it would check the process of civilising the black races, third, that it would greatly impede and complicate South African federation. Remember that federation is the policy to which we all look for the future of South Africa, and that we are taking a step which in the opinion of the Cape Ministers will retard that consummation. They also say that there is sufficient labour south of the Zambesi for the purpose of the mines. Therefore they deliberately disapprove the proposal, and they say that if carried it will have a most prejudicial effect upon the future of South Africa. And what does the High Commissioner say in reply to all this? He says it is a mere electoral trick; that one Party is trying to dish the other. That is the language used by the representative of the Crown of his own Ministry and of two Chambers, the elected representatives of the Colony under a free Constitution. The House will also have read the letters of some representative Boers setting forth the claims of the permanent inhabitants who will be there when all the gold is gone. They say the measure would be a public calamity of the first magnitude for which the temporary slackness of the labour market forms no excuse. Again, what does the High Commissioner say? He says he quite expected that there would be an attempt to make political capital out of it. I regret to read such words in an official document by a man of the eminence and high position of Lord Milner. It would be better if in both these cases he had spoken with more reserve as to the state of opinion and with more respect to those who had come to a different conclusion from himself, and I would say that cheap rhetorical phrases are hardly a substitute for the free verdict of the constituencies on the subject which we should like to possess.

And now, having examined the alleged case for the Ordinance, let me look into the document itself. I would call the Colonial Secretary's attention to his telegram to Lord Milner of 22nd February, in which he says he cannot convey His Majesty's sanction to the Ordinance until satisfied that the local arrangements for the Chinese were adequate. I assume he has considered the point and that the local arrangements are adequate. Then I would ask what about the negotiations with the Chinese Government? Are they proceeding? If they are still continuing, what are the subjects that require further discussion? This Ordinance is a document *per se*. I know of no precedent for it in our history or for the state of life it creates. The Secretary of State for India found an analogue to it in the Army, but his parallel did not seem to be accepted with enthusiasm, and, after all, barracks and barracoons, camps and compounds, will not make interchangeable terms even in the Transvaal. It is contended by the Government that the system is consistent with considerable freedom, a considerable degree of liberty — or a sort of liberty — humane and considerate treatment, and absence of the grossest immorality, and that it is based on freedom of contract. As to liberty, let us free our minds of illusions. The Ordinance is necessary because the sentiment in South Africa is opposed to the admission of Chinamen as free men. They must have cheap labour we are told. The Chinese will afford it. But then they are face to face with the dilemma either they must let them loose over the country, in which case there will be degradation and infection of every kind, demoralisation, competition in trades, and other things which are objected to, and a new race will be introduced where racial difficulties are serious enough already. But if we take the other horn of the dilemma, then they must be shut up and be segregated from the community, and it is difficult to find where the difference lies between that and positive slavery. [MINISTERIAL cries of "Oh, oh!"] The essence of the law is that the Chinaman is a chattel. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No!"] The fourteen offences are incomprehensible on any other assumption. The labourer is forbidden to hold property, he is forbidden to engage in any other work but the specified unskilled work he is sent there for. If he deserts, any man who shelters him may be sent to prison for thirty days as a receiver of stolen goods would be. He is not to leave the compound without permission, and he has no guarantee that that permission will ever be given. If his wife and family come they must live under the same conditions—that is, immured in what has been called a garden city, and liable to arrest if they go outside. When his contract expires he is shipped off, unless, of course, the contract is renewed. I have said that is very like slavery—it is so like it that it is almost indistinguishable from it. [MINISTERIAL laughter.] Well, these are at all events uncommonly like slave laws. "Indentured labour" no doubt sounds better; but do not let us haggle over words; let us see what the thing itself is.

At any rate it is said the coolie goes there with his eyes open, that there is perfect freedom of contract. How is this secured? This Ordinance, with its thirty-five clauses and fourteen penalties, together with the regulations of which we know nothing, except that Mr. Evans and the Attorney-General of the Transvaal have been at work on them ever since 20th February, are to be explained to each individual coolie before he signs. That will require some handling and a good deal of patience. But first the coolie is to be brought to Hong-Kong, possibly hundreds of miles from his home, by the recruiter; and the Colonial Secretary anticipates that this long journey will be enlivened by the recruiter explaining the thirty-five clauses and the numberless regulations, laying stress, no doubt, on the delights of the garden city, but saying nothing of the thousands of feet below the surface, and of course speaking of the purely formal nature of the penalties. When the coolie gets to Hong-Kong the terms will be first officially explained to him, and if he accepts he signs them, and off he goes. That is a contract which a free country ought not to ask him to sign, for under it he will sign away his freedom, a proceeding unknown to our law. But suppose this eligible recruit does not approve, does not even fancy the garden city, then what happens? He must return home at his own expense, or else stay in Hong-Kong. Now these men, according to the Colonial Secretary, are earning a penny or twopence a day—an income that does not seem to lend itself to large facilities for travelling. Therefore the penniless coolies who object to being stranded starving in Hong-Kong will have no option but to sign the contract. How nonsensical to call this freedom of contract! But then let us take him across the seas to his new sphere of influence and suppose the garden city is not found congenial, then he can terminate his engagement and return. That sounds a very fair concession, and quite free from objection. But he must make good the cost of his introduction into the country and pay reasonable penalties for damage. Among these reasonable penalties is the full expense of carrying himself and his wife and children home. How long will it take him to work out his freedom under those conditions? The Colonial Secretary says he will earn seven or eight times his home wages—say a shilling a day. The whole thing seems a farce; and the Colonial Secretary, I must say, is almost trifling with the country when he informs correspondents through the Press that the Ordinance enshrines the principle of freedom of contract. It so happens that we are not entirely without experience in this matter—fortunately not in our country, not under our authority. But thirty years ago there was a great organisation for the transport of coolies to South America through the Portuguese Colony of Macao. Hong-Kong is on one side of the Canton River estuary and Macao is on the other. Macao was the centre of Portuguese recruiting; Hong-Kong is to be the centre of ours. Macao was the depôt where these men were brought from all parts of China before they were sent to South America. Sir, there were such abuses and horrors in the trade and in the treatment of the Chinese labourers that the civilised world rose against it. I need hardly say—I am proud to say that foremost in the chase to hound this down was the British Government. The British Government in 1873 presented what was practically an ultimatum to Portugal, and accordingly the system was abolished. Here is the edict of the Governor of Macao—

> "Chinese emigration hitherto carried on from the port of Macao is henceforward prohibited."

The debate on the subject which took place in the House of Commons on 23rd May, 1873, was brought on by Sir Charles Wingfield, who said that our Consuls all united in denouncing the crimes and miseries of this traffic and in attributing them to the employment of crimps and recruiters. He went on to say that these unfortunate Chinese were not in any way to be distinguished from negro slaves, and that the only way in which the Portuguese Government could put an end to the traffic was by putting down altogether the crimps and the recruiters and the barracoons employed and maintained in connection with it. That, it is true, is only the opinion of an independent Member of Parliament who may have been a sentimentalist. But here is the representative of the Government, Lord Enfield. He admitted the case and quoted from a private letter from Hong-Kong—

> "The greater part of the men obtained are either men of indifferent character more or less at variance with the local authorities."

In Portland and Pentonville we have also men more or less at variance with the local authorities [MINISTERIAL cries of "Passive resisters."]—

> "Or are given to drink—men of extreme stupidity. The majority are boatmen, but one-third are agriculturists or men employed on shore. These men are either deceived by delusive promises, by threats of being split upon for some real or fancied offence against the authorities, or are induced by a continued round of dissipation and drink to promise anything. Many sell themselves to pay their gambling debts."

That is the description given by the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs at that date of the sort of coolies that were got under these conditions; and Lord Enfield said that he hoped the House would believe that Lord Granville, true to the traditions he inherited from Lord Palmerston, was keenly alive to the evils described and would do all in his power to alleviate them. A protest was made to the Portuguese Government—

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: May I ask, just for information, Did the British Government maintain that objection?

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: What objection?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Their refusal to allow those coolies to be transported in British ships.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: There was no question of their being transported in British ships. I am not aware of that. I was talking of the description given of the coolies and of the system, and showing that owing to the condemnation of it, headed by the British Government, it had to be given up.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I had understood that there was objection felt, and I have no doubt rightly felt, by Lord Granville, and that every step was taken by the Government to prevent it. I think that the Portuguese changed the regulation, and that our objection was withdrawn. [An Hon. Member: You withdraw your regulation.]

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The Governor of the Province of Macao and Timor on 27th December, 1873, in obedience to the order of the Government of Portugal, issued the following proclamation—

> "The Chinese emigration hitherto carried on from the port of Macao is henceforward prohibited."

What does this show? It shows the unavoidable nature of the traffic. We have gentlemen here who are different from all others and who can pass regulations which will completely prevent any evil existing, but that is not according to past history. We have no reason to suppose that the Portuguese Government were at all less alive to the necessity of regulation. It is a pretty thing, at any rate, for us, after taking such a creditable part in 1873, to embark on a new scheme of a similar nature. It may be said, many men may think, "After all, this is so remote an affair! It looks a little doubtful, and we have a sort of formal responsibility, but after all it is in the hands of the Transvaal. It is the Governor of the Transvaal or the High Commissioner who is really at the head of this organisation. It is remote from us, and the name of Britain is not brought very directly into the case." But I was more struck than by anything in this Ordinance when I looked at the back of it. What I read was this—and it will bring home to every man how much the good name and character and authority of this country are directly involved—

> "Schedule II. Know all men by these presents that A. B. of—C. D. of—and E. F. of—are held and formally bound unto"——

Unto whom? Unto the High Commissioner or the Governor? Not at all.

> "Unto our Sovereign Lord Edward VII. by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith, in the sum of——for each labourer imported by the said A. B. under a contract dated——made under the Labour Importation Ordinance, 1904, to be paid to our said Lord the King, his heirs and successors,"

and so forth.

I have no doubt that this is the regular legal form. [Ministerial cheers.] Certainly I quote it as showing that we must remember that we ourselves and our King, whom we wish to honour in every possible way, are brought into immediate, nominal, and formal connection with a traffic of the possible nature of which I have already given a description.

Another point I wish to ask the Colonial Secretary is this. The rate of wages is still left blank. Seven or eight times a penny or twopence is just a little too vague. This is, I suppose, in addition to the food, fuel, and medical attendance which the Duke of Marlborough says will be supplied. Look what this means. It means that the Chinaman will receive about one-half of a Kaffir's wages. Have the Government considered how this will affect the native question in South Africa? We are to provide the mine-owners with labour below market value. Will the Kaffir's wages be reduced to the Chinaman's level, or is it the intention to fill the mines with Chinamen alone? We ought to know that. If so, I can well believe that it is counted on as a permanent factor, and this is probably the reason why the amendments of limitation were refused in the Legislative Council. This is an instance of the inconvenience of discussing this matter in the absence of these regulations, or discussing the Ordinance in blank when questions affecting the entire structure of South African society are left open. These are not details, as the Prime Minister said. They are really of the essence of the whole question. I will not touch on the question of the wives and families—that is not a very attractive subject—or the question of the balance of the sexes, but I think a letter in *The Times* by Mr. Wray, who has had thirteen years official experience with the Chinese in the Straits Settlements, opens our eyes to some of the possibilities. The Transvaal may, for the time being, be in a bad way, but this Ordinance, degrading to the British name, repugnant to the sentiment of the nation, and to its most prized traditions, is not the cure for the evils that affect the Transvaal. What is it that this House is asked to put its hand to if it votes against my Resolution? To the resuscitation of a system indistinguishable in many of its features from slavery. [Cries of "No."] Yes, because it hands over human beings body and soul to the custody of their masters, and declares them, in effect, if not in terms, to be outside the pale of human society. The House is asked to commit itself to an economic policy, thoroughly vicious and long since discredited, by affirming that low wages and servile labour are necessary to the promotion of successful industry, and this industry, forsooth, the richest in the world. It would commit itself also to a race policy which argues ill for the peace and contentment of the native races and to a colonial policy which is an outrage on the white men of the Transvaal, whose views have never been consulted, but who all the same are assumed to have assented through a bastard kind of sham self-government that has been extemporised. On the other hand, we in supporting the Motion shall be affirming the unimpaired vitality of those principles which as a great freedom-loving nation, a great colonising race, a great industrial people, we believe to be essential to our common life, and therefore the only sure basis of public policy

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House disapproves the conduct of His Majesty's Government in advising the Crown not to disallow the Ordinance for the introduction of Chinese Labour into the Transvaal."—(*Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.*)

*MR. LYTTELTON: The right hon. Gentleman made one personal reference to myself, and as personal matters are usually unimportant, and certainly unimportant in this case, I mention it in order to get rid of it. It is true that when the Government and myself were accused by Member after Member in this House of instituting a system of slavery in the dominions of the King, I, not reading from a written paper, did in language possibly too rough repel that charge with indignation and scorn. I should like to know, having listened to the long and able speech of the right hon. Gentleman—for I have been quite unable to discern from those observations—whether he persists in that charge now. [AN HON. MEMBER: What charge?] The charge that the British Government have instituted a system of slavery. [Cheers and counter-cheers, and cries of Answer.] I hear a great many cheers, apparently irresponsible—I do not say it in an offensive way—but I do not get a specific answer from any Member opposite.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Certainly I said that, and I shall say it again, "in many of its features indistinguishable from slavery."

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea): In answer to the right hon. Gentleman—[Cries of Order]—I say that the country has answered in the by-elections, and they are not to be howled down by bankers' and mine-owners' representatives.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member was not in order in interrupting.

MR. JOHN BURNS, who rose again amid cries of "Order," said: Mr. Speaker, as you suggested that my interruption was irregular, I wish to explain that I rose at the same time as the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, and I gave way to him, very properly, for the moment. My object in rising was to answer the Colonial Secretary, who wanted to know whether Members on this side of the House were prepared to stand by the charge which had been made. I stand by it. [AN HON. MEMBER: They asked a Question and are afraid of the answer.]

*MR. LYTTELTON: Now I have an answer from the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition. He says so, and I must deal with it in the proper order when the time comes. Before I deal with this matter I would like to take the order of the right hon. Gentleman's speech; and deal for a moment with the case of my predecessor's pledges. It is alleged by the right hon. Gentleman, if I followed him right, that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham took a different attitude from that which has been taken by myself. My attitude and the attitude of the Government was founded on the declarations of my predecessor. It is true that the right hon. Gentleman quoted a statement made in March, 1903—not of the latest view expressed by the late Colonial Secretary; but this is the point of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham's speech—

"I ventured when I was in South Africa, on behalf of my Government, and I can safely do so on behalf of the House of Commons"

—and this was assented to—

"that although technically the new colonies were Crown colonies, and as such, technically subject in the last resort to any ultimatum which may be propounded from Downing Street, the Government would treat them in all matters in which Imperial interests were not concerned as if they were self-governing colonies."

That is the principle on which this Government has acted. And on 27th July the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham again said—

"It is because I believe that at the present time the opinion of the Transvaal is hostile to the introduction of Asiatic labour that I make no movement whatever in its favour, and I should not assent to it if it were proposed. And so long as the opinion of the Transvaal is hostile, the right hon. Gentleman may rest perfectly satisfied that I shall not assent to it and I shall certainly not be a party to imposing it upon a hostile majority. But the right hon. Gentleman asks me what the future is likely to be? I think it is very likely that the opinion which is now hostile may not always be hostile, and I have received information that amongst the Boer farmers the pressure for labour has become very acute and that a great change of opinion is taking place."

There are not wanting indications that that change of opinion, has gradually occurred. In a telegram received only yesterday, Lord Milner sums up the position in words I think I may be allowed to read to the House—

"Distress is steadily increasing since my telegram of 3rd January No. 1. More people are depending on credit, numbers of those seeking employment in every social grade are increasing, withdrawings from savings banks continue exceptionally heavy, railway traffic continues to fall off. Secretary of the Rand Aid Association states that there has never been so much distress as at present existing. As far as European community on Rand is concerned opinion is practically unanimous. With the exception of certain trade societies, who have little influence even with the working men, there is no one left to oppose Asiatic labour. You have in favour of it the municipalities, the chamber of commerce, converted from a majority of 51 to 5 against, to a majority af 61 to 11 for, the great body of white miners, the whole professional class, the various Christian Churches, and a unanimous Press."

That shows what has been abundantly proved throughout the whole argument, that opinion has changed. Nobody doubts that most people were against the introduction of Chinese labour a year ago; but opinion has gradually changed, and the facts of the case have irresistibly compelled the conclusion that there is a shortage of native labour, and, in consequence, a diminution in skilled white labour, and that unless additional black labour is obtained, recourse must be had to other quarters. I will not go through the evidence as I did the last time this matter was discussed to show how that opinion has been growing in strength. We have heard about resolutions from the Cape, but the people who are really interested and by whose opinion we are bound to go are in the Transvaal; and there, not merely the Legislative Council, not merely at meeting after meeting have resolutions been adopted in favour of the proposal—there have been twenty-six such meetings, greater and stronger than some five or six on the other side—and petitions have been in proportion. I shall not shrink from the points the right hon. Gentlemen has urged; I quite agree this does not conclude the question, notwithstanding the absolutely incorrect quotation the right hon Gentleman has affected to give of my words. I spoke of conscientions objections of people with the utmost reverence and respect; and I said no matter what were the economic advantages, no matter what were the economic interests of the Transvaal, if it could be established that ethically or morally it would be wrong, if it involved gross immorality or slavery, and there was anything like this in the Ordinance it should not be sanctioned.

Before I come to that let me recall the fundamental facts of the case. There is a land sparsely inhabited by a black population in a proportion to whites of six or eight to one, a black population unaccustomed to habitual toil. In this land so inhabited you had seventeen years ago and in the interval since a capital of something like £200,000,000 invested; and as the result you have an industry created which has risen in the midst of a rural community, and the existence of this industry has almost of necessity required the creation of a costly, elaborate, modern administration. You have then a devastating war, following which you have a great movement of reconstruction and development, while the country has to contribute large sums for development and war expenditure. Now there are more black inhabitants working in South Africa than there were before the war. Yes, but you do not see the effect of that. The effect is that while so many more men are engaged upon great works of reconstruction all through South Africa you have a shortage of 30,000 in the mines. I do not pause to consider what efforts have been made to obtain this labour. The Blue-book shows that the mining authorities—I do not give them praise for it—of course as business men they desired to get labour as cheap as possible, they went wherever they could in South Africa to get more labour. Obviously for preference they would employ labour to be obtained in South Africa rather than import it from China. Let me say again I do not rely merely on the Blue-books or on the statements of people interested. I have had the advantage of statements from relatives in the country, and I have been told that even at a few miles from Pretoria, near a place where a great camp is contemplated, a farmer contemplates giving up his farm because of the shortage of labour. I have information from sources I can rely upon that Dutch farmers have been compelled, owing to want of Kaffir labour, to keep their children from the education provided for them. There, then, is one side of the picture. The land is rich, no doubt, there is treasure to be had, and you require hands to gather it and to preserve the situation in South Africa. Then, on the other side of the world, you have another nation, sober, industrious, thrifty, and, unfortunately, living in a condition of desperate poverty. The unskilled labour of a Chinaman is worth from five to ten cents a day—say about seven, or 1½d. So great is the congestion of population and the poverty that men are willing to do an enormous day's labour for almost nothing. Dr. Henry reports an incident which would be ludicrous, but it has its pathetic side. He tells how he was carried by three Chinese coolies for twenty-three miles before breakfast, and in order to save the five cents which they would have had to pay for breakfast, they walked back the whole twenty-three miles to Canton—or a walk of forty-six miles before eating their frugal breakfast. That is the condition of poverty in which the Chinese exist. I ask hon. Gentlemen opposite whether it would not be a deplorable thing, by the exercise of His Majesty's prerogative to prevent the coming of a Chinaman sunk in this desperate poverty who is anxious and willing to work, and who would receive in the Transvaal at least 2s. a day, which is fourteen or fifteen times as much as he would receive in his own country. Go to any agricultural labourer in Dorset if you please——

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs): We have already gone there.

*MR. LYTTELTON: I know hon. Gentlemen have gone there, and although I do not say that they have made gross misrepresentations, a great many people have done so in Dorset. But supposing the hon. Member for Carnarvon, with his great powers of exposition, had said to a labourer in Dorset, "If I can give you 15 times the wages you are now receiving, will you consider it?"

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I do not believe he would become a slave at that price.

***MR. LYTTELTON:** I expected that answer, and will deal with it presently. If the Chinese are willing and anxious to come—I do not know, after the misrepresentations that have been made, whether they are willing to come or not—and the people of the Transvaal are practically unanimous in desiring to receive them, His Majesty's Government are confronted with this problem. Are you going to veto this scheme and declare that nothing shall be done? That is one alternative. Are you going to permit Asiatics to come, and, against the wish of the Transvaal, to become a permanent element in the country? That is the second alternative. The third alternative is, are you going to allow them to be introduced subject to some restrictions and conditions? That is the alternative which has been adopted by the Transvaal and sanctioned by His Majesty's Government. It is the only one, in our opinion, by which the transition period can be bridged over—the transition period before the natives of South Africa have increased sufficiently to furnish the additional unskilled labour which is required. Do not suppose that His Majesty's Government were not aware that this would be at first an extremely unpopular thing to do; do not suppose that we were not perfectly well aware that it would be open to the grossest misconception and misrepresentation. We were well aware of both situations, though possibly even our imaginations did not take us quite far enough. But we should have despised ourselves if, for fear of incurring a little unpopularity, or of being exposed to misrepresentations, to which we are not unaccustomed, we had refused to do that which we believe to be in the interests of the country and necessary for the economic development of the country. I believe that hon. Gentlemen opposite will find that there is retribution for misrepresentation, because I for one have trust in the people, which leads me to think that folly and injustice and exaggeration find no permanent lodgment in their breasts.

I hope I have made good the first proposition — the overwhelming majority in favour of the measure; the overwhelming economic necessity for it. I quite admit that there remain other objections to be met, which I hope now to meet. I will take the four objections which seemed to me to be expressed in the right hon. Gentleman's speech. First, you complain that there has been an invasion of the right of the British workman to exploit the country which he has conquered. Secondly, you say that there is an invasion of the right of man, who is alleged under this Ordinance to be a slave, and to present a degraded and demoralising spectacle repugnant to lovers of virtue and freedom. The third objection is that this Ordinance is made in the interests of Mammon and to inflate capitalists' property. Lastly, it is alleged that all the self-governing Colonies are against it. That is not accurate. Natal and Canada have taken the part of wisdom—that is to say, they have passed resolutions affirming that this is the business of the Transvaal, and have absolutely refused to have anything to do with the matter. Now let me take the first of these objections. It is said that white labour ought to have the benefit of the work in these mines. I need hardly pause to point out that white labour can only be employed there at the rate of about 10s. a day, and I pass from the question of figures by saying that it is an economic impossibility to employ white men at 10s. a day when the cost of living for a man and his wife with three children is £24 a month in the Transvaal. I am perfectly certain that hon. Gentlemen opposite will think I do right to spare them a long discussion upon figures when there is this unquestioned fact at the bottom of the whole situation. Even the right hon. Gentleman did not attempt to deal with this question, and I do not wonder, because he has the excellent authority of one of his most experienced colleagues to show that it is impossible to obtain white men for unskilled work in South Africa because white men cannot be found to do Kaffirs' work. The right hon. Gentleman said with great candour that he did not know much about the subject of white labour. Let me read him an extract from a book written by his right hon.

friend the Member for South Aberdeen on his impressions of South Africa—

> "All rough, hard work is done by natives. White men think it beneath them and only fit for blacks. The coloured man is indispensable to the white man; he is a necessary part of the economic machinery of the country, whether for mining, or for manufactories, for tillage, or for ranching."

That is absolutely true. We have had two long debates on this subject already this month, and I have waited in vain for a correction by the right hon. Gentleman of the views that his colleagues have put forward on the question of white labour. Therefore, it is necessary for me now to read this extract. Everybody knows it is an idle dream to suppose that white men will go from this country in order to become the competitors of Kaffirs.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: We were told that the war was a miners' war.

*MR. LYTTELTON: I do not accept the phrase, but perhaps the right hon. Gentleman is not aware that besides the unskilled workmen there are skilled workers in the Transvaal who are paid very high wages, and, if you get a sufficient number of natives to work the 3,000 stamps that are now idle, you will enormously increase the number of white men employed in the mines who get very fine wages. But if the present state of things goes on much longer these white men will be compelled to come away from the Transvaal and leave it to people who are far less desirable than themselves. In the last debate I ventured to ask the hon. Member for Battersea whether he could produce instances of miners who have gone out from this country to work in the mines of South Africa in competition with Kaffirs, pulling at the same chain with them, filling the same wheelbarrow.

MR. JOHN BURNS: Miners do not pull at a chain.

*MR. LYTTELTON: He could not do so, and he knows it would be an absolute libel on the class which he represents to say that they would do it. I admit that the last time I gave that challenge he did say that in West Africa he did some work with some blacks. I venture to say that if he worked with ten blacks it was as captain of the eleven. If he was working with any gang of West African natives it was as foreman, and not as a fellow-workman. My point, then, is this—that what you want in South Africa is a good class of white. You do not want to degrade and to deteriorate the dominant race by putting them in competition with those whom they regard as their inferiors. I admit it is a sad thing, but it is the fact; and I defy anyone in this House who knows Africa, or who knows any tropical country, to say that it is a possibility to get at the present time—and I am afraid it will be a long time before you get—white men to go into the same work, the same class of work, and the same neighbourhood with those who are centuries behind them in civilisation. To do so would be not to elevate the black, but to deteriorate the white.

I pass to the second point. I do not need to labour that which has been already stated by Lord Milner with an authority which cannot be doubted, and which has been accepted by those who really know the conditions of mining in South Africa, that if you do get sufficient labour to work the unemployed machinery now existing in the Transvaal, if you get 3,000 more stamps working than you have now working, you will give an opportunity which will be readily taken by the skilled workmen of this country and Scotland to go out to South Africa and enjoy the high wages which skilled labour commands there.

I come now to the point which the right hon. Gentleman has had the courage, for I think it requires courage, to allege against the Government—that they are instituting a system of slavery, or a system akin to slavery. It is fair to him to say that he does not, that he could not, know of the conditions that exist. They have not yet been published. I am dealing now with the contract which is said to be a contract of slavery. The conditions will be these. The contract, as he has seen it in the Blue-book, is to be advertised in the Chinese language by the Chinese Government throughout all the villages in which recruits are to be sought; and, therefore, months before the recruiter goes into the village the Chinaman, who is a very different person from that which, apparently, hon. Gentleman opposite, who have not been in China and read nothing about the country, seem to imagine, will have had the contract before him. He is well educated; he is perfectly capable of understanding a bargain; he is well organised—it is an utter folly and delusion to suppose that he is not—and organised in trades unions, too. If that is so, is the right hon. Gentleman so anxious to prove his fellow-countrymen are slavers that he must fain represent us as practically forcing these Chinese to come on board a ship because they do not understand the contract? His question, as I understood it, was what hope would there be for a Chinaman, with twopence in his pocket, when he is brought several hundred miles, to get back to his own village when, for the first time, the contract was explained to him? The right hon. Gentleman did not, and could not, know of this provision that has been made for advertisement in the villages; but he will see that, when such advertisement is made, when it has been talked over by the villagers, when they come to embark at Hong-Kong, or at any other port, they will be in a position to appreciate the bargain. Then, having had the matter advertised and having had the contract fully explained by an official of the British Government and of the Chinese Government, the Chinaman goes on board a ship provided with better comforts than emigrant ships are now compelled to provide under the regulations of the Board of Trade. Then he comes over to South Africa. He is equally protected there by members of his own and representatives of our nationality, and he is placed in a location or compound—I do not care which you call it—which is to be of very considerable size and far bigger than the Kimberley compounds, which have always been spoken of by those who know anything about them in terms of warm approval. Last time I quoted Canon Scott Holland, who has seen these compounds——

DR. MACNAMARA (Camberwell, N.): And who is against Chinese labour.

*MR. LYTTELTON: And who is against Chinese labour. I quoted him as the testimony of an adversary. Now I will quote Dr. Moffat, an honoured name among missionaries in Africa. He, again, is an antagonist. What does he say?—

> "There are those who condemn the compound system in no measured language as slavery, as a deep machination of the tyrannical 'capitalist gang' to secure a supply of labour, as an infamous and degrading bondage into which thousands of unhappy and helpless natives are forced. This is the sort of language we hear used, in some instances by men who do not know what they are talking about, in others by men influenced by motives respecting which the less said the better."

That is an extract from an article in the *Contemporary Review*, edited by Mr. Percy Bunting, a Nonconformist. In the same number articles are to be found from Mr. Stead and Mr. Courtney, so I think I have gone into the camp of the enemy for evidence.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: What is the date?

*MR. LYTTELTON: March, 1901. In addition to the other provisions of the contract, the Chinaman will earn at least twelve or fifteen times the wages that he is earning in his own country; he is to have rations at the expense of his employer, housing at the expense of his employer, and medical assistance at the expense of his employer. It is useless to try to reason with those who say that such a system is slavery. But I would point out that nearly all the provisions which have been objected to by hon. Members opposite as constituting slavery are present in colonial Ordinances, for which that side as well as this side are responsible. I have been advised that it is not necessary, and that it is undesirable, to specify a minimum wage on the face of the Ordinance, but there is not the slightest question—I stand here and give the House my assurance — that the Chinese will receive at least the amount which I have specified. Because we leave them to bargain themselves in this matter, can it be said to be a badge of slavery in our Ordinance as compared with previous Ordinances? It is the precise opposite. It is the recognition of their intelligence.

SIR HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): Is there any provision if they are not satisfied with the wage?

*MR. LYTTELTON: There is a provision that, if they are dissatisfied with anything, whether it be the wage or any other circumstance connected with the contract, they are to have a position better than anybody who is a party to a contract in this country, for they will have the right to break it without the usual consequences of the breach. There is no penalty, no damages. The sole provision is that they should make good the actual out-of-pocket expenses.

SIR HENRY FOWLER: The cost of the journey from China.

*MR. LYTTELTON: That is a better position than they would have if they were Englishmen under a similar contract. Let me tell the House this. After the language we have heard used on the other side, it is scarcely credible that in British Guiana in 1894, at the time when right hon. Gentlemen opposite were in power, an Ordinance was sanctioned and put in force in which there was the obligation on the part of the coolie to reside on the plantation of the person who employed him, and the obligation of working on that plantation. There is a penalty if the coolie is absent without leave; there is the penalty of imprisonment if he deserts; there is a penalty if anybody harbours the deserter; and, differing from this contract, and differing from the settled policy of this Ordinance, there is the ability on the part of the Governor of the colony to transfer the labourer without his consent. There is another difference—the period of indenture of the Indian coolie is five years, and this is three. Again, another difference; it has been pointed out that at the end of the period of indenture in British Guiana and Trinidad the coolie is at liberty to remain in the country, while by this Ordinance he is to be repatriated at the expense of his employer. Is that a difference which is said to constitute slavery? Just observe what the absurdity of the position is. It is not slavery in one case, but is slavery in the other, because in the one case a man goes on living in a foreign country, and in the other he is repatriated at the expense of his employers.

SIR HENRY FOWLER: Would the right hon. Gentleman now give the House all the provisions in favour of the labourers in British Guiana and Trinidad, which he has studiously avoided doing?

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): It is a garbled statement.

*MR. LYTTELTON: The right hon. Gentleman will have his opportunity. The case does not stop there. We have heard from the right hon. Gentleman of the opinion of Australia, and the opinion of Australia is one to which everybody who occupies my position must, of course, attach great weight; they have a right to discuss matters of Imperial concern, and I assure the House that I gave their opinion and that of Cape Colony my most respectful consideration. But I confess that when this matter first became a subject of discussion in Australia I was unaware of one or two matters. I find that in 1880 Queensland passed an Act which brought indentured labourers from the Pacific Islands; the Ordinance provided that they should be confined to certain kinds of agriculture, and in 1884, after experience, they expressly forbade, by an amending Act, numerous employments which were scheduled to the Act. They provided, in addition, for the repatriation of the indentured coolie unless he was re-indentured. That is the Ordinance of a self-governing Colony.

MR. JOHN ELLIS: That has been repealed.

*MR. LYTTELTON. No, it has not. I will take another equally ludicrous test of slavery. It is supposed to be slavery because the alien is not entitled to hold land; that is another badge of slavery, and I have been challenged to find specific enactments in the Colonial Office against it. I can give a better answer than that. By the law of the United States at this moment no alien can hold land. If hon. Members are anxious for a later instance of Australian wisdom on the subject I would refer them to the West Australian Act of 1897, in which there is compulsory repatriation after service of indentured Asiatics, and there are employments forbidden to the indentured labourer. There again, are the two elements. The only rag of a distinction which hon. Members opposite can draw between the legislation for which they are responsible and that which they have called slavery is repatriation and restriction of employment, and one finds a place in Acts sanctioned by a Liberal Government with which Lord Kimberley, the Colonial Secretary of Mr. Gladstone, did not think of interfering. Another in an Act of a self-governing democracy as recently as 1897. That is the position. If this were slavery, if it deserved the abominable terms which have been heaped upon it, of course, whether it were a self-governing colony or not, it must expunged. But we find that Lord Kimberley, the Colonial Secretary to Mr. Gladstone, certainly not a statesman inferior in virtue to those whom I face, permitted such a statute to go on the Ordinance-book in 1880, and it was amended, and amended against the labourers, in 1884. The explanation is that it is for a Party purpose that hon. Gentlemen adopt their present attitude. Possibly the statesmen of 1880 were older and a little wiser than the distinguished men who occupy that Bench now. There was one other point that was made by my right hon. friend the Member for West Fife, who hinted that the Indian Government were totally against indenturing labour with the conditions of repatriation. [AN HON. MEMBER: Lord Milner said it.] Lord Milner, as the right hon. Gentleman opposite stated, said something to that effect in June, 1903. I can only tell hon. Gentlemen opposite, however, that, though I am not in a position to go fully into it, negotiations have taken place since then with the Indian Government, and the position then vouched for by my right hon. friend is not now correct.

SIR HENRY FOWLER: I put a Question to the Secretary of State for India, asking whether at any time—I went as far back as 1902—there had been any communications between the Government of the Transvaal, the Colonial Office, the Secretary of State, or the Government of India with reference to the immigration of coolies into South Africa; the answer was that there never had been any.

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield) said last session he had asked numerous Questions on this subject, and had had numerous replies from the Secretary of State for India.

*MR. LYTTELTON: I think the right hon. Gentleman skipped a word inadvertently.

SIR HENRY FOWLER: I asked the Secretary of State to repeat the answer that there might be no confusion as to what the reply was. He said that the statement arose out of a remark that Lord Milner had telegraphed to this country as to the foolish and obstinate attitude of the Indian Government. Such an attitude was repudiated by the Secretary of State for India, and the statement was made to me that there had been no communication with reference to the immigration of Indian coolies for the purpose of mining.

*SIR MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I happen to have the exact words of the Secretary for India's replies given last Wednesday to the Questions of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton, which, with the permission of the House, I shall read—

"MR. BRODRICK: The extract from the Natal newspaper referred to in the Question is entirely unjustified by the facts. The Government of India have never been invited to allow coolies to be recruited for labour in the mines of the Transvaal. Correspondence is proceeding with reference to the position of Indian subjects in the Transvaal, and the possibility of recruiting Indian coolies for work in that colony on Government railways, but it has not reached a point at which it could be laid before Parliament.

"SIR H. FOWLER: Am I to understand that no communication has passed between the two Governments with regard to the immigration of Indian coolies into the Transvaal for the purpose of working in the mines?

"MR. BRODRICK: My answer was distinct on that point. No correspondence whatever, that I am aware of, has taken place between the two Governments with regard to the recruitment of Indian coolies for employment in the mines of the Transvaal."

*MR. LYTTELTON: I did not hear the Question or the answer; but as far as I know no negotiations or correspondence has ever taken place with reference to the employment of Indian coolies in the mines; but negotiations have proceeded with regard to the employment of Indian coolies on other works. I may say that Indian coolies are not fitted in any way for employment in the mines.

The right hon. Gentleman who preceded me mentioned the moral aspect of this question in such a manner as to convey that there was some dreadful moral iniquity behind this proposal. But he did not specify, and I have heard no one specify, anything or give any evidence on this subject. I agree some very honoured men have seen some danger in the proposal. The House is familiar with the provisions we have made for the bringing over of wives and families of labourers at the expense of the employer, and for taking them back also. I do not see myself what more we could possibly do. I believe it is urged—I have seen no evidence for it—that there is some peculiar vice of the Chinese which is supposed to be going to be introduced into the Transvaal. I have gone into this matter, I have taken the opinion of those who are well acquainted with the Chinese in the Malay States, and their opinion is entirely against the allegation that the Chinese are an immoral people ["No"]—forgive me, it is. It has not been the subject of official return, but I have had the very great advantage of the Blue-book, which I have already quoted, with regard to the Chinese in British Colombia. The Royal Commission appointed by the Canadian Government in 1902, a Commission that was extremely hostile to the Chinese as a whole, on the ground, doubtless, that they furnished cheap labour, reported fully and fairly on the matter. They say there were some 16,000 Chinamen in British Columbia, with scarcely any female population, and yet according to the returns from the penitentiaries there were only three indecent cases against Chinamen in four years. They add, dealing with the religious and moral aspect of the question —"Certain it is that the Chinese have many noble virtues and characteristics. There are customs amongst us which they from a moral point condemn as much as we do many of theirs. They compare favourably with others in their observance of law and order. There is little doubt that to the frugality of their habits is to be attributed the comparative absence of sensuality." Again, the Bishop of British Colombia writes that the number of Chinese women is very small, and that there was no proof that the men in any way whatever had debauched the community. "They lead quiet, sober, and moral lives," he says; "there is not a particle of evidence of their importing new and detestable vices." Surely, with these testimonies before us, and considering that the Bishop of Pretoria, the late Bishop of Natal, and 30 out of the 31 representatives of the Churches of South Africa, Free and Established, passed a resolution in favour of this measure, we are justified in not refusing to sanction the Transvaal Ordinance.

It is repeatedly said that this is a pandering to Lord Milner and the capitalists of South Africa. What is the root of the policy of which this is the expression? It is to make South Africa, as far as possible, a country to which white men will freely go; to develop it and make it a great country, and not a country with simply a head and no body, and to develop it out of the wealth of the mines. It is the fact, incidentally, that the mine-owners wish for labour to get that treasure, and to get it quickly. But the real and permanent interests of the country, the prosperity of its commerce, its agriculture, and its means of transport, depend upon the working of the mines; and the policy which asks the House to enable the Transvaal to get its treasure is a policy of making a good use of that wealth and not a bad use. Of every sovereign which comes out of the mines the Government is to receive a substantial share, and that share is to be used in maintaining education and a Judicial and Civil Service beyond corruption. I say that is a worthy policy—a policy which recognises the true destiny of this extraordinary country, which in seventeen years has developed from a rural community into a community with vast potentialities of wealth. What has been the history of British Colombia and California? Both these countries were based, in their economic inception, upon the gold mines worked by Asiatic labour; and their history has shown, what I trust will happen also in the Transvaal, that they were developed with the working of the gold mines, so that when the gold mines became exhausted they yet remained a splendid inheritance. That is the policy of my predecessor in office and Lord Milner. Some compliments have been paid me at the expense of Lord Milner; but Lord Milner's character is so much above mine that it is unnecessary for me to repudiate those compliments or to defend him. That policy is not to make any vulgar use of the wealth of the mines, but to make use of it for the splendid purpose of building up a great community in the Transvaal, a community in which Briton and Boer may live worthily together. That is a policy worthy of a great man, and it is a policy to which I trust this House will always give its most cordial support.

*MR. MOULTON (Cornwall. Launceston): It is always a pleasure to hear a speech by the present Secretary of State for the Colonies on account of the frankness and clearness with which he states his position, but I feel that in this case anyone who has given more than a superficial attention to the subject will feel that the right hon. Gentleman wholly fails to realise the fact that he has here to deal with a subject of the greatest importance which has seized hold not only of the intellect but also of the sympathies and the imagination of the whole of our great Empire. He believes that he can deal with this matter by treating it as a small administrative problem in which he has to justify minute regulations, and that if he shows that those regulations do not differ much from others which have preceded them it will be an adequate answer to the impeachment of the Government. I venture to think that the right hon. Gentleman will find himself grievously in error, and that if this be not proved by the vote to-night it will be proved later on when the matter goes before the country. It is useless for him to defend himself or his predecessor by pointing out that they stand pledged to support the views of the Transvaal in all things in which Imperial interests are not involved. In this question Imperial interests are most deeply involved. The whole fame of the name of the Empire is involved, and I think I shall be able to show that there is involved a question vitally affecting the interests of people at home as well as those of the people in every one of our self-governing Colonies. The Colonial Secretary has again and again cited Ordinances in our self-governing Colonies approaching more or less to that which is proposed in the present case as though they justified him in claiming the authority of those Colonies in his favour; but he has not added that in every one of those cases the great mass of public opinion in the Colonies has repudiated what has been done in the past, and has thrown the whole weight of the authority of those colonies upon our side in protesting against the Empire, in the person of the mother country its head, being disgraced by a repetition of those blunders.

I propose to take the case put forward by the Colonial Secretary, in the same order in which he took it, and to show the wide difference between his views and ours. He has given reasons for allowing this Ordinance. I think the word "reasons" is misplaced. He ought to have said the "temptations" to allow this Ordinance. Anybody who has read the history of the past will have noticed that where a nation is trying to shake itself free from the entanglements of slavery, or anything approaching thereto, there always come up these same temptations — the necessity of helping or keeping up trade, manufactures, or agriculture, by slave labour or labour under compulsory regulations of this kind. If the right hon. Gentleman wants to realise in what company the arguments he puts forward have been found in the past, let him read anything published in the Southern States shortly before the War of Secession, and, except that it is far more richly adorned with Scriptural quotations than his speeches are, he will find exactly the same train of reasoning as he has now propounded. The temptation is no new one, and this is a moment when England as a nation and as an Empire has to decide, for good or for evil, whether she will turn back to the bad ways of the past or raise one stage higher the standard of national morality and of the recognition, I will not say of the equality of man, but of the dignity of human nature, which up to this time she has always been the first to put forward and the most strenuous to support.

Let me point out the fundamental error that underlies the speech of the right hon. Gentleman and the policy of the Government. The industries of a country meriting the support of a Government and of legislation he takes to be defined by the existing industries. We join issue with him there. You ought to regard only the existing legitimate industries, and if an industry can exist, *i.e.*, can only be made to pay by degrading conditions of labour, it is not a legitimate industry. You always find that when a country has had cheap servient labour industries spring up which ought not to exist, and they have been profitable solely on account of the degrading terms under which the labour necessary to carry them on has been obtained. These industries justly suffer when better times come. When you draw the distinction between legitimate industries—that is, those industries which are or can be carried on with labour employed under proper conditions—and illegitimate industries which cannot so be carried on, you will at once see that the whole case of the Government falls to pieces. What are the main industries of South Africa? There is the large diamond industry at Kimberley as to which no difficulty has arisen. In the open market, with fair treatment and liberal payment, they get as much labour as they require freely and without any legislative oppression. Next, there is the mining in the Rand. People talk of this as if it were a question of only one mine and whether that mine would go on or stop working. The Rand represents mines of every degree of wealth. One of them, I know, pays 180 per cent. dividend. There are many others that pay large dividends, and many that make a profit, although they pay but small dividends, because it happens that those mines have been capitalised far more highly than they should have been. Some of the mines cannot be worked at a profit at all. Suppose you raise the price of labour. The result will be that the richer mines will still make a profit and will go on working with properly remunerated labour. Those that make a profit go on, and those that do not make a profit remain undeveloped until the progress of science has invented machinery which will lower the cost of working them, or until the price of coal has gone down, or until the labour market is fuller and wages are smaller. The consequence is that the true legitimate industry, *i.e.*, that which can work and pay properly remunerated labour will continue, and when the Colonial Secretary says that we must have 30,000 more men employed in the mines or otherwise the Rand will stop work, he means that these mines that cannot be fairly carried on will stop, and in my opinion they ought to stop. The consequence is that what he proposes to do is to accept the profits of the present time as a state of things that must be kept up no matter what be the conditions necessary to accomplish it, whereas we say that you must make your conditions of labour fair and content yourself with such profits as that permits of. Your profits must depend on the fair remuneration of your labour and not the remuneration of labour on your profits.

There is the gulf between us, and it is a gulf on one side of which are the British people, and on the other side you find the Government. For remember that this is a problem that the British people thoroughly understand They thoroughly understand what is meant by bringing in cheap foreign labour under contract terms to work at very low prices. It has nothing specially to do with gold mining or South Africa. I could make out exactly the same case for bringing Polish labour into this country in order to manufacture goods so cheaply that profits could be maintained or increased as the Colonial Secretary has made out for the introduction of Chinese labour in the case of the Rand. Indeed I could make a still closer parallel to the proposals which have been so loudly applauded from the Benches opposite. Take the county in which my constituency is situated. Does anybody doubt that if you could bring in Chinese labour to work for all but nothing a large number of the disused Cornish mines would be able to work at a profit? The disused Cornish mines have still plenty of copper and tin in them, but those metals cannot be raised because the prices of copper and tin are such that it would not pay for the labour. But we are told that the maintenance of an industry is sufficient justification for bringing in labour upon terms so unnatural that no citizen of the country would allow himself to be pledged to them. If it be so, then you would be justified in bringing Chinese labour into Cornwall to work these mines. Do not let it be thought that this parallel is a piece of ingenuity on my part. I am going here to shelter myself under the language of the spokesman of the Government in the House of Lords on this very subject last Friday. Upon that occasion the Duke of Marlborough said—

> "If an employer in this country were anxious to employ foreigners under a system of contract, no objection could be taken. Why should the thing be inherently wrong when the employer was in South Africa and the employee was a Chinaman? If the industry had been cotton or wheat-growing, no one would have said that the demand for labour was based on morally bad principles. But because the individual concerned was yellow, and the industry was gold-mining, a prejudice was created."

So that the view held by the Government—I beg pardon, *a* view held by the Government—and put forward by their spokesman in the House of Lords is that this plan of supporting an industry by foreign contract labour imported at a very low figure is applicable to England as well as to South Africa, and is applicable to farming as well as to mining. It could not be more clearly enunciated, and I trust that all of us when we next go to our constituencies will take care that this statement of the spokesman of the Government is put clearly before the electors. It asserts broadly that in order to preserve profits, if you cannot get them in any other way, the Government is justified in permitting by legislation the bringing in of foreign labour to work upon terms which would be scorned by every British working man and which every British Court would regard as an infringement of the liberty enjoyed by everyone under our common law.

Now we have got the issue fairly and squarely before us. Are you or are you not to bring foreign labour into the Transvaal to support existing profits? Let me deal with that question. My learned friend has drawn the picture of these huge mines representing £200,000,000 of capital. He asks us, Are you going to let the stamps that have been put up in those mines lie idle? I can assure him that £200,000,000 of capital does not give me any great idea, or at any rate any very clear idea of what is the real value or what was the actual cost of those mines. There is a great deal of that £200,000,000 which should be put back into the pockets from which it was originally taken out by over-capitalisation. If this could be done we should be in a better position to find out which mines can work and which mines cannot be worked. English labour is only too willing to be employed if the terms are fair, and I think black labour could also easily be obtained if the terms are fair, and as I have said I have not the slightest desire to keep alive those mines which cannot be worked with fair conditions of labour. A most pathetic appeal has been made to us not to impoverish the Transvaal by stopping mines from getting labour. Will it impoverish the Transvaal so greatly? To whom do the profits of those mines go? If ever there was an industry which brought little wealth to the country itself in comparison with its size, it is mining in the Rand. The mines are owned outside the Transvaal, and if I might judge by their strange names which are so difficult to pronounce, the owners are outside the English race too. At any rate, to a very large extent, the mines are all held outside the Transvaal, and the consequence is that the profits which are made pass immediately out of the country, and the only portion of the results of mining that remain in the Rand is that portion which is expended upon wages. The result is that when I am asked to support an Ordinance to permit wages to be put down to such a miserable figure, I am asked to do so in order to secure that as small a portion as possible of the wealth of the mines should remain in the country. By bringing in Chinese labour you diminish even to a vanishing point the amount of benefit that these mines bring to the country because, beyond the absolute necessities of life, the Chinaman practically makes no demands on the trade of the Transvaal. With the exception of his food the Chinaman practically consumes nothing. He saves up his wages to take away with him at the end of his service, and the consequence is that not only will the profits of the mines go into pockets foreign to the Rand but even the money paid in wages will, to a very large extent, go out of the country. You see, therefore, that in order to secure profits to men who are not members of the community in which the mines are situated, you are practically letting the enormous mineral wealth of the Rand be taken away into foreign countries, while the country which produces that wealth benefits very little indeed.

There is one further consideration which must not be overlooked. I agree that the Rand is a country of enormous mineral richness, and we have taken upon ourselves the awful moral responsibility of acquiring that country and annexing it to our Empire. How have we got it? By conquest. But you cannot keep it by conquest. You must keep it by colonisation. Everyone who has thought out the whole matter of the future of South Africa knows that its prosperity depends on the way in which we bring colonisation into that country in order to tie to us that which has been acquired by conquest. How are you going to do it? You can only do it by using the great mineral wealth of the Rand according to sound principles of government, namely, by letting the industries of the country collect round themselves a working population fit to form the nucleus of the future nation that you hope to see arise in that country. You have got in the millions to be raised from the Rand the materials for attracting such a population, but what are you going to do? In order to keep up the price of shares, in order to keep up momentarily the profits of the people who own the shares, you are going to allow these mines to be worked by people whom you are going out of your way to say you will not permit to be citizens of the future country. If, on the other hand, you choose to work the mines by white labour, what you will do will be to lower the profits of the richer mines and perhaps delay the working of the poorer ones, but you will absorb an enormous quantity of white labour which will form the nucleus of the future inhabitants of South Africa. There are enough of those rich mines to enable you to carry out such a policy, and create a large gold-raising industry collecting round it, as the industry of a nation should, a population which is to be the nation in the future. But if you throw this opportunity away, if you allow the mines to be worked out as they will be—for all mines get worked out—by a population which will leave the country absolutely as poor of men as before they came in, you lose the one chance of saving England from the awful fiasco of having conquered a nation and not being able to colonise it.

I listened to some statements in the sonorous language of the Colonial Secretary as to the inadequacy of the supply of labour for the raising of the enormous sums which are annually obtained from the Rand mines. This does not justify his Ordinance. What is the good of raising these sums if they pass away, leaving the country no better than it was before? But we are told that the vast expenditure on the country can be wholly or partially defrayed by the taxation of these enormously rich mines. Even if this be so it is unwise to hurry. At the root of the whole matter is the maxim "take time." Very few people realise what this war has brought upon us. They do not realise what a task it is to make the conquered territory a sound part of the British Empire. You will never do it if you try to do it hurriedly. The only way is to build up a nation there, and when you examine all the proposals put before the House by the Colonial Secretary you will find that at the bottom of them all is the haste with which he wants to do that which nothing but time will do. No, if you will resist this temptation, if you take a course which will allow only the richer mines to be worked by reason of your insisting on fair terms of labour, I have not the slightest doubt that the splendour of Johannesburg will go back for a bit, and it ought to go back to that to which it is legitimately entitled, but you will have no fears then of failure in the future. You will be standing on a solid foundation—on the foundation of a gradually growing up people of British race. And that people will not be ashamed to do work. The strangest thing in all this unreal discussion is that it is assumed that the English people, when they get to South Africa, must necessarily be ashamed to do work such as that which has made the English working class what it is in our own clime. I do not believe it. To tell me that English navvies will not make railways in South Africa when they make them all over the rest of the world is a thing it would take ten thousand times as much evidence as we have yet heard to convince me of. No doubt much of the rougher labour will be done by blacks, but that does not conclude the question. The Colonial Secretary talked about not being able to use English labour on the mines as if there were not different types of labour on the mines. The whole of the surface labour on the mines—all that which has to do with extraction of the gold from the ore—all that which has to do with the management of gangs—and even much of the work down in the mines—all this is work of a superior order, and work which there would be no difficulty in getting Englishmen to do successfully. Their field of labour will grow with the use of machinery. We hear of blacks making holes by hand labour, but everybody knows who has the most superficial knowledge of the subject that there has been development in recent times of portable drills and other like tools which will work by compressed air or electricity. In fact, all this wretched unskilled labour is a sign of backward mining. But though it is behind the standard of to-day it is a valuable type of mining for the people who are directing this crisis, because that mining is done by voteless miners. Enterprising mining requires men to whom you cannot deny the right of citzenship. It is the dread that there will grow up around the mines a population fit to form part of the self-governing population of the Empire that gives rise to the intense opposition of the mine-owners to white labour at this moment. It is expressed by them frankly in their letters. One man, probably the most typical example of a South African magnate, Mr. Rudd, compares the enormous advantage of having the work done by 200,000 non-voting blacks instead of 100,000 white people who would combine and give labour troubles. These mine-owners want a low class of beings to work the mines, too low to possess the privileges of citizenship, and that is what makes them insist that we shall not try even for a few years the experiment of regular white labour under proper conditions. It is not a question of not being able to work the mines with English labour, it is a question of not being willing to do so. Remember that they are now raising £14,000,000 a year with the present supply of black labour, and even before the war their greatest output was only about £18,000,000 a year. There is no question therefore of stopping the mines, but only of developing the output more slowly. But these abominable Ordinances will stop the inflow of British labour. If at this time you allow them to bring in Chinese you will find that gradually the area of British labour will get smaller and smaller, because the Chinaman is a most intelligent man, and, whether you pay him for it or not you are sure to work him as an intelligent man, and gradually he will take places which but for his presence would be filled by British workmen, and when you begin to take that course there will be a perpetual tendency to increase the area of Chinese work. All the things he can do he will be employed to do, and a little extra pay will induce him to do them. The instinct of the British working classes is perfectly right when they say that this is a blow at white labour. It is too clear for reasoning. They know that this is a blow at their labour market. They and their fellows are the real persons to satisfy the need.

I have dealt with the question of necessity. I say there is no necessity of importing Chinese labour because this is the precious moment when you might build up a population fit for self-government. I have said it is bad because by doing so you lessen the tendency to employ white men. I am now going to examine the proposed conditions, and in so doing I am not going to say anything about serfdom or slavery or anything of that kind. I do not care to fight about words; it is the substance that I object to. What I say is, that this is employing workmen on degrading terms which no self-respecting nation would accept, unless it was under the pressure of the direst poverty. If I want support for that statement I have only to appeal to the speech of the Colonial Secretary. What does he say? "Oh let us have this Ordinance, and the Chinese will come. They earn in their own country only 1½d. a day." Is the fact that they are paid 1½d. a day in China a reason to induce us to approve of the Ordinance? Are we going to say that it is justifiable because the conditions under the Ordinance will be better than the misery of that over-crowded nation? Do not hon. Gentlemen see that that is making the misery of China the standard of British rule? I should have thought that we should have begun at the other end. I should have thought that we should have ascertained what conditions the workmen ought fairly to have, and that we should not have thought it a salve to our conscience that there are men so miserable that they will take much less. I do not think that we ought to take advantage of the misery of their position. That is the answer to the right hon. Gentleman's appeal to the poverty and wretchedness of the Chinese.

I wish to say one word in regard to the *modus operandi.* Anybody who looks at the machinery of the Ordinance will see that from the moment that the Chinaman starts from home until he comes back after three years he is never to have the slightest chance of changing his mind. It is ridiculous to talk of a man who can only earn 1½d. a day changing his mind after going to Hong-Kong. How is he to get back? And if he goes to South Africa, and wishes to avail himself of the right to return home before the expiry of the three years under the repayment clause, how is he to get the money to enable him to do so? These provisions which purport to give him the power to change his mind are pure delusions. They are solely for production on Conservative platforms. You might as well leave them all out, so far as their practical use is concerned. But the Colonial Secretary says he is going to make a fresh regulation which he knows of and we did not know, and which he says will change our opinion. The right hon. Gentleman says that the Government are going to advertise these regulations in the Chinese villages. He thinks that the honour of the great British nation is going to be saved by a Chinese poster! It is too ridiculous to suppose that a poster could give to a man who had never left his village the slightest idea of the contract which he is accepting, and the consequence that will flow from it; and the moment he takes the first step he will have to go through with it.

Mr. Moulton.

But are the conditions such that we ought to allow the British nation to put its imprimatur upon them? I have read a collection of opinions in a booklet put forward in regard to this Chinese labour. A gentleman discussing whether there should be Indian coolies or Chinese labour in the Transvaal says—

> "If it is not the Chinaman, it is likely to be the East Indian. He is a British subject and you cannot keep him off the side-walk, nor out of trade, and there will be some difficulty in inducing him to go home again."

I cannot be malicious towards the right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary, but, if I were for a second, I would like to fancy him walking with this gentleman and hearing him saying, "I like the Chinaman because you can keep him off the side-walk; you can treat him as if he were cattle. The East Indian man is a British subject, and you cannot keep him off the side-walk nor out of trade; and there is some difficulty in inducing him to go home again." How proud the Colonial Secretary would feel of the sentiments of his companion. The same gentleman says a little farther on—

> "The Chinaman, if he comes, must come as a hewer of wood and drawer of water—as nearly a beast of burden as it is possible to make the human animal into—and when his task is done he must go. He may not become a miner, neither may he hold a prospector's licence nor a licence to trade. No white man may enter into partnership with him for the performance of mine or other contracts, nor may he enter into contracts on his own account. Above all, he may not acquire, by purchase or otherwise, any house, lands, or claims, nor, in his own right, enter upon the occupation of rented premises. He will come simply as a labourer, and a labourer he must remain."

Then, this gentleman goes on to point out that the people in America had not been careful enough about these Chinamen. He tells how the Chinamen had by their industry made one of those great Pacific railways, and that after it was constructed they had, very naturally, engaged in other branches of trade, from which, owing to the Chinaman's great utility, shrewdness, thrift, and industry, his enemies had never been able to dislodge him. "There must be no such mishap in the Transvaal," he adds. What is the mishap? It is that the Chinamen get the reward of their great utility, shrewdness, and industry! The friends of the Colonial Secretary think that that is a great mishap! And they ask that these men should be brought to the Transvaal to create wealth for them, but should be made to bind themselves never to accept the natural reward of their utility, their thrift, and their industry. The right hon. Gentleman's friends want to take these workmen and pay them a little more than the starvation wages they are paid in China and make them promise that they will not rise, or try to rise, and we are to authorise them to tell these poor Chinese that if they do not keep to these grovelling conditions they have broken the bond they have made with this great country of England, and come under the primitive provisions of the Ordinance!

This is what the people of England will not stand. The people of England are now beginning to understand this question. They understand that these men are going to be brought to the Transvaal to lower the wages of white men. It is not to prevent the mines stopping, because the rich mines will go on, whatever wages are paid. These Chinamen are to be brought under restrictive conditions which will forbid them to rise so that their industry, thrift, and utility, however great it may be, will not bring them their reward. That is the mishap which the English Legislature is to take care will not happen! We in the House of Commons may approve of this Ordinance, but, if so, it will be a permanent stain upon us. Do not imagine that you can get out of responsibility by saying that things were done in the past which were nearly as bad. There is a vast difference between consenting to an Adminstrative Act out of inadvertance or want of appreciation of the importance of the question, and consenting to a thing being done which has been prominently brought to your attention, and has been adopted deliberately after discussion. England has to say now, after due consideration, whether it shall support this Ordinance; and all I can say is that while I am satisfied that it will effect irreparable damage to the Empire if we do adopt it, I am also satisfied that there is not one hon. Member who will vote for this Ordinance who will not bitterly regret it in after life.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): In listening to the speech of the hon. and learned Member who has just sat down, I could not help feeling that his sympathies were as strong as those of hon. Members who will support him least. The hon. and learned Member expressed no sympathy whatever for what I may call the industrial conditions which at present exist in the Transvaal. He was quite willing that we should limit our sympathies, and that England should limit its duty to the consideration of the mines, which, as he termed it, were prosperous. But it seems to us, who, I hope, take the somewhat larger view that the responsibility of this country does not rest solely upon our appreciation of those who are prosperous, and of the industries of those who are prosperous, that that is not the gospel generally preached from the other side of the House. And I cannot imagine that it will appeal generally to the Labour Members and those whom the Labour Members represent. What is good for this country is good for South Africa. [OPPOSITION ironical cheers.] I may point out that consideration should be had for the whole of the Transvaal, and for the whole of the industries there and all that concerns them. May I ask the House, and especially hon. Members on the opposite side, if it is quite fair to suggest at the present time that this Ordinance is a thing that has been sprung on the country. Is it quite fair to suggest that it is not the expression of the will of the South African people?—[OPPOSITION cries of "No"]—the will of the people of the Transvaal. [OPPOSITION ironical cheers.] I will take it on the ground that there has been an evolution of opinion from circumstances that existed a year ago, when the people of the Transvaal believed, when the members of the Chamber of Mines, and the Chamber of Commerce, when Lord Milner, and when the people at large believed, it was possible that Chinese or any Oriental labour need not be called for. But events have shown that the supply of native labour has not been sufficient. If we are to take into consideration the responsibility that exists there now—for the Legislative Council represents, for the time being, the Government of the country—we cannot afford to disregard the industrial circumstances, and the amount of capital invested there. I, for one, repel the idea that the capital invested there is capital represented by a few great mine-owners. Is it not the fact that in the Consolidated Gold Fields there are twenty-five shareholders who hold an average of ninety-nine shares each; and that there are 200,000 people in this country who hold shares in the Transvaal mines? Is it not also the fact—and I commend this consideration to hon. Members opposite—that there are hundreds of thousands of colonists in the Transvaal whose interests are at stake in this matter? I believe it to be a fair thing to suggest that this country should have regard not only for the interests of the moral idea, which is behind a great deal of what is pleaded for on the other side of the House, but should primarily have regard for the welfare of the people of the Transvaal, who have risked their all, and who are in danger of losing their all. It is not the great managers that we ask consideration for; it is the small owners, the small investors, who have sunk their all in the mines of the Transvaal.

These figures will bear upon what I call the colonial aspect. Before the war the expenditure on the Transvaal was £4,000,000. It is now in 1904 at the rate of £7,000,000. The debt of the Transvaal before the war was £14,000,000; it is at present £71,000,000; and that £71,000,000 represents in the first place the £35,000,000 which has been borrowed since the war; a liability incurred to the extent of £30,000,000; the Johannesburg municipality works, established there for the welfare of the people to give the municipality all the appliances of civilisation and conditions they did not have under the Kruger Government, and the railways which entailed an expenditure of £1,600,000. These responsibilities resting upon the Transvaal are a very important consideration for this country, quite apart from the investments of hundred of millions of money in the Transvaal. The responsibility for payment of revenue is a thing we cannot get rid of in this country, and since this House and the country are responsible for the well-being of that country, we cannot and should not refuse the means whereby they can meet their responsibility and pay their revenue. Then there is the question of the Cape and the question of Natal. The debt of the latter has risen from £9,000,000 to £13,000,000, to which must be added £11,000,000 for authorised expenditure. The debt of Cape Colony has risen from £29,000,000 to £36,000,000, to which mus- be added £5,000,000 authorised expentditure, making £41,000,000 altogether. What I want to ask is this. If before the war in 1899 the returns from the mines were £20,000,000, and their contribution to the Government of the country was according to the revenue, will the return of £12,000,000 or £14,000,000 now meet the necessities of the country under the new conditions? I believe that is a fair question to put to this House. The responsibilities resting upon the Administration there are very heavy; the responsibilities resting upon the people are very heavy; and to withhold the opportunity for acquiring the full amount of labour necessary to work the mines is to involve ourselves in the penalties—and in the natural penalties—of neglect and lack of consideration which will very rightly in the future lay us open to the eternal charge of misgovernment on the part of this country. May I suggest one or two points in connection with this. In the Transvaal before the war there were 6,240 stamps at work, whilst in 1904 there are only 3,275. In 1899 they were producing at the rate of £20,000,000, whereas in 1904 they were only producing £13,000,000 annually. In 1899 the capital invested in the mines was £70,000,000, whilst today it is well over £100,000,000. At the present time with these stamps idle there are between 7,000 and 8,000 British white citizens out of work. Was it not a reasonable or a fair thing in our colonial policy to grant to the Colonies the right to decide for themselves as the people of the Transvaal have decided?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: How?

SIR GILBERT PARKER: The Transvaal has decided in favour of admitting labour to supplement that black labour which has hitherto never been quite sufficient, but which, under the present circumstances, is altogether insufficient for the time and for the occasion.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS Carnarvonshire, Eifion): How was it decided, and by what authority?

SIR GILBERT PARKER: It has been decided by no authority, unless it be by those natural indications by which people in this country give expression to their will. Do hon. Members opposite venture to suggest that if there were at the present time in the Transvaal any real objections to the employment of Chinese labour they would not have been made manifest in very extraordinary ways? No objection has made itself manifest. There is a practical unanimity amongst all the white British population. Then the Boer population has given to this movement no direct opposition, and if they gave any opposition it would be on the basis that the opposition was given at the time of the sitting of the Commission, when the solution, as presented by the Boers who gave evidence, was with the view of compelling black labour to supply the needs of agriculture and the mines. But in view of these circumstances; in view of the fact that industry is retarded; in view of the fact that white labour there awaits its opportunity; in view of the fact that black labour has not been and cannot be sufficient, I say that this House, if it has the power to accept the suggestion of the hon. Member who has just sat down, will throw back the great mining industries of the Transvaal in such a manner that a few of the original mines would do well, but the whole of the rest of the industries would be crippled. At the present time there are twenty-three mines in the Transvaal which were working before the war that are not working now. That seems to be a serious thing. All the mine-owners ask is—and I am not an advocate, necessarily, for capital, but I will take on this question the colonial view—that the colony shall have the right to develop on its own lines, and under its own conditions. The Colonial Secretary pointed out that this introduction of Chinese labour was only a transitory and passing phase. We hope that is so; but if it is not to be transitory we must abide by the conditions that may obtain, and at the present time I am quite willing to show by the Minority Report the great need for labour from outside those areas where native labour might be requisitioned. It was pointed out by the Minority Report that it was necessary for the development of the mines to have 115,000 men. At the end of January, 1904, there was still a shortage, according to their own estimate, of 78,000. It is said that all efforts to recruit men for the different parts open to recruiting have been utilised, and that since the war there has been spent in recruiting £455,000. In spite of the most careful supervision of Sir Godfrey Lagden, and of all the efforts to obtain labour, we are still between 70,000 and 80,000 short of their estimate.

It seems to me the natural suggestion is that, given labour from outside, under natural and reasonable conditions that labour should be got. Hon. Members opposite made the point that there were strict regulations framed in order to confine Chinamen to one species of work alone. Has not that been done in the interests of British white labour, and if it had not been done, would not hon. Members opposite have fought, have challenged, and have impeached us, because we allowed the Chinamen to compete with British and white skilled labour? Our whole object is to prevent Chinamen from becoming colonists. I am not in favour of employing Chinamen if you can get Britons or black men to do the work. We are simply asking that there should be added that supplementary labour on the part of the Chinaman, which will give the industry of the Transvaal that which they need, but meanwhile we are taking up the ground that the Chinaman shall not become a colonist. All the regulations that are made are in the interests of non-colonising. He shall be in the meantime a bird of passage or a servant if you like, but I do not think it becomes people to be too strenuous on that point when we consider the conditions of domestic servants in a great city like this. There are servants in houses in London, and doubtless in the houses of some hon. Members opposite, who only get out for two or three hours in the course of a week, and these are the hon. Gentlemen who stand up and complain of those regulations which compel the Chinaman to keep to a certain prescribed area; to work for wages which he willingly agrees to accept under conditions to which he has given assent before he leaves his own country. The question of Canada has been brought up. Will the hon. Gentleman opposite tell the House why it is that in Canada, a country not subject to labour strikes or labour agitations, a country which has always stood strenuously for the rights of labour and which has perhaps some of the best labour legislation which exists in the Empire, there are at the present time between 15,000 and 16,000 Chinese employed, namely, in the province of British Columbia. Why have not workmen from the East gone over to the West? Why had the Canadian Pacific Railway to employ 8,000 Chinese to build that railway on the eastern side? Was it because the company could not get labour from the East? Partly that. Would this country be prepared at the present time to give State-aided emigration to working men here to go out to the Transvaal and compete with black labour in the first place? Why did not the Canadian Government import into British Columbia eastern labour? Because once a labourer goes out he is free—his passage having been paid—to throw up his job at a moment's notice, and go into skilled labour for which he presently becomes fitted. No Government could force such a man, if he preferred skilled labour, to confine himself to unskilled labour. But in the case of the Chinaman in the Transvaal he will be confined to unskilled labour; and in that connection the regret of the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken might have been better applied to the British workmen now out of work in South Africa. The hon. Gentleman's sympathy might have been better applied to that population which has to depend practically upon one industry alone for its future and for its safety. In every colony there has always been one industry which has been the basis of its prosperity. I cannot imagine an Australian or Canadian being told that he must not take up the bad land or the second best land, but that he must take up the first best land, leaving the rest waste because it cannot be worked under advantageous conditions. We have been told that no claim should be made on the community of this country in relation to the Transvaal mines; but in this country men have made great fortunes out of their discoveries. Men have made fortunes out of patents, and then have floated their businesses as limited liability companies. Some of these men who have made fortunes out of their discoveries, their enterprise, and their business character are Members of this House, and it is unfair to suggest that the mine-owners are more sordid than they because they desire the mines to be worked.

I venture to say that the House of Commons will be taking a great responsibility on itself if it refuses to endorse the action of the Government in this matter. The Transvaal is in great need. Undoubtedly, there is not enough labour for the mines. The Transvaal asks for assistance in its difficulty. Is the reply that we will make the reply which was given to a colonial representative at the Court of France? He asked the French Colonial Minister for help for Canada which was then in financial straits and the reply was—

> "We cannot think of the stable when the house is on fire."

The colonial representative replied,—

> "No one can say you talk like a horse,"

The Transvaal is in the same position. The inhabitants are saying to this country, "Believe in our *bonâ fides*; believe we mean well by British industry," and is the reply to be, "We have got to think of ourselves and our fine moral ideas." There may be in the regulations in this Ordinance some of the incidents which we might wish to see otherwise, but the real fact is that it will bring hope again to an embittered and troubled land. A vast number of mines must have a vast amount of labour with which to attain success. We hold the land in trust for the people of the Transvaal until the time comes when, under happier fortunes, they control their own internal Government. But until that time comes it is our duty to see that the path of progress is neither impeded nor beset. We are told we must have regard to the morals of the Transvaal. I have yet to learn that the moral standard of the Colonies is not as high as the moral standard of this country. The moral welfare of the colony may be left to the people. The moral life of a colony is always upward and not downward, and this House may believe that the Transvaal has *bonâ fides* which might be properly copied in the policy of this country. Sir, in the interest of colonial conciliation—for it will never come, and colonial federation will never come in that country until the Transvaal is prosperous—Cape Colony and Natal will both decline, if the great sources of wealth in the Transvaal are crushed or impeded at the present time to join in federation. The £20,000,000 it produced before the war will not serve now to bring to it success. The Transvaal must now produce £30,000.000 or £40,000,000. The real danger in the future is not the scarcity of black labour; in the whole of South Africa, the era of prosperity must come; the danger in the future is that, in the exigencies of political life, hon. Members opposite may sit on these Benches and may view with anxiety the difficulties of the present moment. If they come to sit here they will have to reconsider the speeches made by themselves and their supporters in this House and to consider whether they are prepared to revoke an action which has the approval of the people of the Transvaal, and which, when thoroughly understood, will have the approval of the people of this country.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): The Colonial Secretary having in the course of this debate referred to some expressions which I had used in the course of my visit to South Africa, I may, perhaps, tell the House the impression my visit to South Africa made upon me. The case that is made is this. We are told that unless Chinese labour—far cheaper labour, much cheaper labour than Kaffir labour,—is given to the country the mines cannot be carried on and the country must become insolvent. On what basis does that case rest?

MR. LYTTELTON: Not cheaper.

MR. BRYCE: I took it from the right hon. Gentleman's own figures. The right hon. Gentleman gave us the figures, and it is the result of those figures which was made the basis of the Transvaal Commission. No one could read the Report of that Commission without seeing that the Commission entered into its laborious inquiry with that as a foregone conclusion. It is perfectly clear that they had that object in view and that was the result at which they did in fact arise. One knows perfectly well that the reasons for the dearth of black labour are transitory; that it is due to the fact that many of the labourers have earned a good deal of money during the war and so do not care to return to the mines, and also to the fact that there are many other kinds of public work which they like better. There is no reason to believe that in times to come a sufficient amount of black labour will not be found. No one knows so much about the blacks of East Africa as Sir Harry Johnston, and he conceives that there is nothing to prevent a sufficient supply of black labour being found. Then I go to white labour. The reason white labour is so costly is that the cost of living is so high. Why is food so dear? Because railway transport is so high, because there are high duties upon food, and because no efforts are made by the mine-owners to cheapen food and in that way to reduce the cost of labour. The best way to cheapen the cost of white labour would be to reduce the cost of living. Before we give up in despair the idea of employing a large quantity of white labour, let some effort be made by the Government and the mine-owners to reduce the cost of living. It has been said all through these debates that it will be for the benefit of white labour to have a greater number of Chinese in the Transvaal. No evidence whatever in support of that proposition has been given, and I venture wholly to dispute it. The Chinaman is a very intelligent worker. He is not like the Kaffir, who cannot be put to any work requiring skill. For many purposes the

Chinaman is as intelligent a worker as the white man, and the tendency will be to employ Chinamen more and more. It is also true that Chinamen are accustomed to work under "bosses" or foremen of their own nationality, so that instead of there being a greater employment of white foremen the tendency will be to have Chinese foremen, and thus there will be a larger number of Chinese in the higher positions. There is really very little mining work except of the highest kind, requiring the greatest amount of scientific and mechanical knowledge, which Chinamen cannot do, and I do not see the least reason for supposing there will be the increase of white labour which has been suggested. Even the spokesman of the Government in another place on Friday last did not venture to estimate that more than 5,000 additional white men would be required. I should have thought that even that was a greatly exaggerated estimate. At any rate it is the high water mark of the Government's expectations.

An HON. MEMBER: 5,000 whites to how many imported?

Mr. BRYCE: 5,000 whites altogether. Nothing was said about the number imported. At any rate, considering the capacity of the Chinaman, and how few are the employments he is not fit to undertake, there is no reason to think that the number of white men will be substantially increased. This is not a case in which the country is benefited by the money being spent in it. In ordinary cases the money earned by labour, whether by the employer or by the workman, is spent in the country in which it is earned, but the Transvaal loses the result of the labour at both ends. The mine-owner is an absentee, living in Park Lane or on the Continent, and does not spend in the Transvaal the large revenues he draws from the mines; nor will the labourer spend his earnings there, because he will take his wages back to China. Therefore the Transvaal is a marked exception to the general rule, that the remuneration of labour goes to benefit the other industries of a country. The hon. Member for Gravesend devoted a large part of his speech to endeavouring to prove that the Transvaal desired this Ordinance. I fail to find any evidence of that. The hon. Member said that the Transvaal had given its decision. Where and how? We are told that we should treat the Transvaal as a self-governing colony. If it were a self-governing colony it would be able to give its decision. But it is not a self-governing colony, and you cannot treat it as one. No evidence has been brought before the House showing any such preponderance of opinion in the Transvaal as would relieve us of our responsibility. After all, the responsibility belongs to this House, and we cannot escape it. If we were to sit in silence and see the Government sanction this Ordinance we should assume our share of the responsibility for it; therefore, feeling as we do, we were bound to bring forward this Motion. We do not know what the view of the Transvaal is; but we know that the views of the Boers, as expressed by their most trusted leaders, such as their generals in the late war, are entirely opposed to the introduction of Chinese labour. We have the letter signed by General Delarey and others in which it is condemned in the strongest terms. This is not by any means a question for the Transvaal alone. Cape Colony is largely interested. If the Transvaal derives the enormous benefit which is suggested from Chinese labour, Cape Colony also will largely benefit. But Cape Colony does not expect any such benefit, or else she thinks the evils to be feared are greater than the prospective benefits, because both Parties there are strongly opposed to the Ordinance. As to other self-governing colonies we know what is the view of Australia. The Colonial Secretary dissented from the description of the war as a miners' war. Let me read what was said by Mr. Deakin in the Federal Parliament in Melbourne. Mr. Deakin said that—

> "Australia had been told that the war was a miners' war, but not for Chinese miners; a war for the franchise, but not the Chinese franchise. The truth, if it had been told, would have presented a very different aspect, and would have made a very different appeal to Australia."

The opinion of Australia on all that was said during the war is a matter which ought to be regarded.

The Colonial Secretary says we are face to face with two alternatives. One of them is to bring in Chinese with certain restrictions; and the other is to allow them to come in freely as they used to do in Australia and California. Let me, in the fewest possible words, examine those two alternatives. The first alternative is to allow them in with restrictions. The Colonial Secretary objects to the term "slavery." I will not wrangle over a word, but the right hon. Gentleman should bear in mind that this is a system under which the labourers are to be confined in certain enclosures, and there are to be severe penalties for breaches of this provision. It is a system under which there will be the greatest restrictions on their power of holding property. I will not discuss whether that is slavery or not, but it is certainly not freedom. The Colonial Secretary trotted out certain provisions from some of the West Indian Ordinances. We should be employed the whole evening if we compared carefully the provisions of those Ordinances with the provisions of this Ordinance now before the House. The provisions of the Trinidad Ordinance, which were referred to by the Colonial Secretary, were more carefully drawn with a view of protecting the labourer than this Ordinance. Part 8 of the Trinidad Ordinance, I may say, contains 236 clauses, and most of them are designed to give a careful and elaborate protection to the coolie. If the right hon. Gentleman reads the Trinidad Ordinance he will find that it contains the most carefully drawn provisions with regard to the wages which the coolie is to receive, his hours of labour, his holidays and residence, and he has to reside in a cottage of his own and not in an enclosure as is provided in the Ordinance now under consideration. No one can compare the two Ordinances referred to by the Colonial Secretary with this Ordinance without feeling that under them the life of a coolie will be a great deal better, and his security against unkind treatment a great deal more secure than it will be under the Ordinance now before the House. The Colonial Secretary has referred to Australia and the Ordinances passed by the self-governing Colonies, but he omitted to inform us that those Ordinances had been repealed by the Commonwealth Parliament.

MR. LYTTELTON: The Commonwealth has not repealed either of those Ordinances, but it has made provision by which at a future date no further coolies will be provided.

MR. BRYCE: I did not say they were slaves, but I was simply replying to the right hon. Gentleman's argument in which he said that what was being done in South Africa was justified by what happened in Australia. He has admitted that the Australian Commonwealth has decided that this form of labour will have to cease in Australia. And why? These Ordinances were passed under the influence of the planters, but when the Commonwealth Parliament came into existence and the public opinion of Australia was brought to bear upon this question, this foreign labour disappeared. I agree that this Ordinance is not likely to involve cruelty, and I am sure the Government will take steps to prevent any cruelty. But what does this Ordinance do? It intensifies the sense of separation and antagonism between different races, and it also intensifies the scorn and contempt which a superior race feels for an inferior race. It creates a class who are debarred from the ordinary civil rights which every man ought to enjoy, and you could not have an Ordinance like this in any part of the territories of the United States of America. In California, when the Chinese were there, the State of California endeavoured to pass severe legislation exposing Chinese to various disabilities. All that legislation was destroyed by the constitution of the United States, and the United States Courts of California placed the Chinese on a level with United States subjects in regard to the holding of property. Therefore an Ordinance like this is quite impossible under the United States Constitution. It should be remembered that we gave the first principles of liberty to the United States, and we surely ought not to go further back with regard to protection than we then gave to persons inhabiting British territories, or further back than the protection given in the United States to those who come into that country. The effect of these provisions will be to degrade labour, and in degrading labour you go some way to degrade humanity itself. You demoralise the human race and you make the difficulty of teaching the two races to respect one another far greater. Someone may say that labour is already degraded in South Africa. I am obliged to admit to some extent that that is true. I would point out, however, that it was degraded by the fact that slavery obtained there. It is because slave labour was there that you have now labour in South Africa which is considered unworthy of white men to perform. Are you going to repeat that fatal lesson now? Are you going to deepen that lesson on the minds of the white races in South Africa? It is the worst thing you could do. From a book that I have written, the Colonial Secretary quoted a saying that all unskilled labour in South Africa is done by black men. I do not say that it should be done by servile classes. It is perfectly true that all unskilled labour is, or at all events when I was in South Africa, was done by black men. It is a regrettable fact, but are you going to make it a permanent fact? Are you going to stamp it for ever on that country? It was often said during the war that what we must do was to make South Africa a white man's country. I have always felt it very doubtful whether we can make it a white man's country, but certainly you are not taking the right way to do it. You are taking the way to make it impossible that it ever shall be a white man's country. The reason for that is not the climate. The climate of the upper part of the Transvaal is as perfectly fit for white men as the mining districts of Australia and California. It is because of the prejudice the white man has against labour. You are going to intensify that. You are going to make it more dishonourable by having it done by these animated and servile instruments. I profoundly regret the decision at which the Government have arrived. When I hear the Colonial Secretary's arguments as to the impossibility of doing anything without Chinese labour, I am reminded of the arguments used before the American civil war. It was contended then that the prosperity of the South was bound up with the maintenance of slave labour, and that argument was used very often in England, where the people were told that the prosperity of Lancashire was bound up with slavery. Happily the workers there were not convinced of it. We have seen how false that was, and that the Southern States are more prosperous now under free labour than ever before under slavery. I use that illustration to prove that people applied to that case exactly the same arguments for slave labour to secure the prosperity of that country that you are applying to South Africa now.

That is one alternative. The other alternative the Colonial Secretary puts forward is that of allowing the Chinese to come in free. That is not the one the Ordinance adopts, but in spite of the rigid provisions of the Ordinance the Chinese may soak through them and you may have a Chinese population growing up there. In the next place you have no security that once the Chinese have been brought in these restrictions will be ultimately maintained. It may well be that in time they will be abandoned, and that you will have a Chinese population permanently established there. Let us for a moment consider what will be the results of Chinese immigration in South Africa. I do not join in the harsh judgment pronounced on the Chinese. Far from it. I have seen the Chinese in California and Hawaii, and I think they have many virtues and do not deserve the hard things said about them in many quarters. Where they come under proper conditions, as in Hawaii, they are a useful element in the community and not at all a demoralising element. But here you are not bringing them in under proper conditions, and you will probably get the worst possible kind of Chinese. What I apprehend from the coming of Chinese to South Africa are dangers of another kind—not moral difficulties due to the circumstances of this "compound" life, though I believe they will be demoralising. The danger I apprehend from the general settlement of Chinese in South Africa is this. The real problem in South Africa is the question of colour divisions. Allowing that the hostility of the Dutch element and the British element will have passed away when they have been fused into one, as they will be, the permanently abiding difficulty will be the reconcilement of the black race and the white race, and it may prove in South Africa in the future as great, or a greater danger, as the presence of the black race has been in the Southern States of America because the whites are in a small minority in South Africa.

What are you going to do if you bring in Chinese? You are going to aggravate and complicate that race problem, which is already sufficiently difficult, by bringing in a third race, which if it comes in in considerable numbers will probably mix with the black race, and if it mixes with the black race a mixed population will spring up which will be a great deal more formidable, and a far more difficult and dangerous element in the population than the Kaffirs now are. The Kaffirs have little power of organisation or tenacity of purpose. The Chinese have a great deal of tenacity of purpose. They are an intelligent and tenacious race with remarkable power of combining and associating themselves together for any common purpose, and therefore, if you ever have in South Africa a population of Chinese, or a race of mingled Chinese and Kaffirs, you will have an element to deal with which the white population will find far more dangerous and far more formidable than any population the Kaffirs can ever produce. It may be said, I daresay it will be said, with truth, that what I have suggested is a thing that may never arise in the future, but when we stand at the parting of the ways and deal with one of the gravest questions any nation can deal with—the distribution of races on the earth's surface—we are bound to consider what the ultimate result of our action may be. It is not a historical parallel. There is no historical parallel which is absolutely exact. But when the Spaniards discovered America they found gold in the islands of the Celebes. There was no Spanish labour which could have been utilised except at a prohibitive cost; and therefore they set the native Indians to work in the gold mines. They said, "We must work these gold mines; we must have the gold, and as we cannot get white labour to work them ourselves, we must have Indian labour." The result was that in twenty or thirty years they killed off all the natives; and then, in order to find the labour which was necessary for the development of the country, they brought the blacks from Africa, and with that bringing of the blacks from Africa began the slave trade, which lasted down to within the memory of men now living. I do not say that the bringing of Chinese labourers into the Transvaal is comparable in extent, or in the changes made in the social condition of the country, or in the horrors produced by African slavery. I draw no parallel in that respect at all; but I call the attention of the House to the fact that a decision of the greatest moment was then made, which was hastily taken under the pressure of an immediate emergency, and that that decision had far-reaching consequences which no one foresaw, and which no one could have foreseen. The first man who brought a cargo of blacks from Africa to Virginia to grow tobacco in the seventeenth century did not contemplate that there would be at this day 9,000,000 of blacks in the United States, or that a civil war would be the result, which would last for four years, and that now the black problem would be one of the greatest which the United States has to face. So, we cannot contemplate what the ultimate results may be or what we are going to do in South Africa from the introduction there of Chinese labourers.

The evils which follow from a mistaken policy may be very different in one country from another country. I think that may be agreed on; and so I return to the main issue, on which I have only a word to say. And that issue is, that if there is so marked a case for believing that you cannot get more black labour and more white labour—if the two alternatives which we have to consider are so grave—each of them open to many objections—this question arises, is the gain worth the risk? Is the gain to be expected from the bringing of the Chinese into the Transvaal worth the two risks involved? You may, no doubt, have larger dividends in some of the mines; but there are many mines not worth working: they are too poor. These mines only give work to the Johannesburg and London Stock Exchanges. They are of no value. There are many gold mines in Wicklow in Ireland and in

Wales which would be worth working if labour were cheap enough; but if a mine cannot be worked at a fair rate of wages it cannot be worked at all. There is a moral objection and the thing cannot be done. It would be a great deal better to stick to the broad lines of policy on which we have gone hitherto, than to endeavour to depart from those lines in order to get cheaper labour. And what will be the result? It will be the speedier exhaustion of these mines. Let it be remembered that at the present rate of working we are practically getting now as much gold as in the good years before the war. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No."] Well, very nearly. We are getting out as much as in 1895. I ought to have said before the Jameson Raid. We are getting practically as much as in those days of tremendous prosperity, or what everybody believed to be extraordinary prosperity, before the Raid. What is the difference that will be made by Chinese labour? It is that the mines which, at the present rate of working, will probably last fifty or sixty years, will only last twenty-five or thirty years. But after that there will be no demand for iron and machinery and food—all kinds of demands which would stimulate the prosperity of the rest of the country, and then the chance will be gone. What is more important, all the English element in the country's population will be gone, because there will be no reason for staying on in Johannesburg. The country will cease to be a mining country when all the gold has been taken out of it, and when there are no mines there will be no demand for food, iron, machinery, etc., and, as was the case in America, these townships will lapse into the condition in which they were before mining was introduced. The country will have to live on cattle farming, which is in the hands of the Dutch, and the country will then be again a Dutch country. You will have lost your British population because you will have exhausted your country. The Rand will have come to the end of its short merry life and it will be again that stony waste which it was before the mines were discovered, but the consequences will remain in South Africa, and when the prosperity of the Rand has been exhausted these consequences will remain and, for many ages to come, so far as we can see at present, these consequences are likely to be unpopular.

*SIR FREDERICK MILNER (Nottinghamshire, Bassetlaw): It is appropriate that this vote of censure should have been moved by the right hon. Gentleman who was responsible for the phrase "methods of barbarism" as applied to our soldiers in South Africa. The right hon. Gentleman's speech will stir up ill-feeling in South Africa, and do mischief, as his speeches have done before. The right hon. Gentleman seems to think that those of his fellow countrymen who do not agree with him are capable of almost any atrocity. The Radical Party are maliciously endeavouring to persuade the electors of this country that it is His Majesty's Government who are initiating this legislation for the introduction of Chinese labour, but every Member of this House knows perfectly well that the Government are simply assenting to an Ordinance which has been exhaustively discussed by those responsible for the Government of the Transvaal, and approved of by the eminent statesman who represents this country there. Members of the Transvaal Legislative Council have set a good example which many Members of this House might adopt. Some of them were opposed to the Ordinance, and spoke their opinion plainly, but when an overwhelming majority of the Council were against them, instead of trying to kill the Bill by factious obstruction, they did their best to make the Ordinance as good as it could be made, and in the end it was passed practically with unanimity. In the face of that fact, I do not see how it would have been possible for His Majesty's Government to withhold their approval. I do not believe that hon. Gentlemen opposite, if they had been in power, would have dared to refuse their sanction. Some of the greatest disasters that have happened to this country were due to the fact that the Government at home chose to think that they knew better than those they sent to represent them on the spot. That was the case with the Soudan expedition to rescue Hicks Pasha, and also after the British reverse at Majuba

Hill. I have spent many weary hours in looking through the Blue-books, trying to discover whether it is true that the people of the Transvaal are opposed to the Ordinance, but I have utterly failed to find any evidence of it. It is true that in Cape Colony meetings have been held protesting against the Ordinance, but in all the speeches there made it can be seen that their objection was a selfish one, because they feared that imported Chinese might drift into the Colony. It was not the business of Cape Colony to interfere with the domestic affairs of the Transvaal. Those who protested in the Transvaal a year ago against the Ordinance are now convinced that Chinese importation is absolutely necessary. The Chamber of Commerce of Johannesburg, which in 1903 rejected a motion in favour of Chinese labour by fifty votes to five, have now by sixty-one votes to eleven decided to urge that the Importation Ordinance shall be made operative without any furthur delay, and a great deputation from Johannesburg has waited on Lord Milner, pointing out the disastrous consequences which must ensue if the consent of His Majesty's Government to the Ordinance is withheld. The attitude of the religious bodies ought to have some weight with the Opposition.

And, it being half-past Seven of the clock, the debate stood adjourned till this Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

CHINESE LABOUR (TRANSVAAL).

Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [21st March], "That this House disapproves the conduct of His Majesty's Government in advising the Crown not to disallow the Ordinance for the introduction of Chinese labour into the Transvaal."—(*Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.*)

Question again proposed.

*SIR FREDERICK MILNER: When the Sitting was interrupted I was pointing to the extraordinary unanimity with which all classes of the Transvaal not only supported this Ordinance but pointed to the absolute necessity of its immediate passage, and I was just saying that the opinion of the religious bodies of the Transvaal ought to have some influence with this House. The Bishop of Pretoria wrote expressing his regret at being unable to join the deputation, and stated that the introduction of Asiatic labour was the only solution of the present difficulties. The Rector of St. Mary's, Johannesburg, stated that not a word of protest had been uttered by any of the religious bodies on the spot, Church, Roman Catholic, or Nonconformist. The Witwatersrand Church Council, embracing members of the Baptist, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan Churches, by thirty votes to one passed a resolution deprecating the agitation against the Ordinance by their brethren of the Free Churches in England. Whilst even the Salvation Army sent men to the deputation which waited on Lord Milner. Mr. Strong, a working man, in a very forcible speech, pointed out the disastrous effects of the present stagnation in the interests of the white working man. I would specially point out to hon. Members opposite one sentence in his speech, which some of them might well take to heart—

> "The misrepresentations at home,"

he said,

> "are almost unbearable to those who know the true conditions of things in the Transvaal."

Lastly a petition was presented to the Council, signed by 45,078 white male adults, in favour of the importation of indentured coloured labour. Sir George Farrar, in presenting the petition, said he was satisfied from personal knowledge, as well as from the sworn affidavits of the canvassers, that it was an absolutely *bonâ fide* document. In the face of all this evidence how could the Government refuse their sanction?

Now there are three principal accusations which have been made by the Radical Party against the Government in connection with this matter. We are told that the Government and Lord Milner are truckling to the German Jews and Rand capitalists, and that it is in their interests we support this Ordinance. This accusation is so ridiculous, so outrageous, that it seems to me it should be treated with the contempt it deserves. I do not believe there can be many hon. Gentlemen opposite who really believe in it themselves, and they must have singularly distorted imaginations. I do not believe there is one hon. Member in this House who would dare get up and assert that Lord Milner has been guided in his decision by any personal motive. I would go further, and say I doubt if any Member would assert that he has been guided by any but the most patriotic motives and by a sincere desire to serve the country in which he has laboured so earnestly and so assiduously. I do not think that even the Leader of the Opposition, notwithstanding the low estimate he places on some of his fellow citizens, would endorse this monstrous allegation as regards the Prime Minister or any member of his Cabinet. No, Sir, it is but a base electioneering cry, raised by a Party who, after many years of starving in the wilderness, are hungering for office. Personally, I have but little sympathy with the capitalists. I think they undoubtedly aggravated the situation by their meanness in trying to cut down the wages of the blacks. But I am not prepared to wreck the country in order to punish the capitalists. As a matter of fact, they will suffer, for it has been computed that they will have to pay £200,000 for every 10,000 Chinamen they import. Then we are told that by consenting to this Ordinance we are shutting out the white workmen from South Africa. This accusation is almost as absurd as the other. The exact opposite is the case. It is because trade is at a standstill, firms are being forced to retrench, and hundreds of able-bodied Europeans are out of work, that the necessity for more unskilled labour is so urgent. It is this fact that has weighed with Lord Milner more than any other. Let me quote his words to the deputation who waited on him this month, he said—

> "If one thing is an intense object of my desire, a paramount object of my policy, it is to increase the white population of this country, and to increase the opportunities of the white working class to earn a fair wage. An increase in the supply of coloured labour is not only necessary to the prosperity of the whole population already here, but it is a necessary preliminary to a large increase of that population. Without that supply of coloured labour, the present white exodus must continue. I reckon, and am prepared to stake my reputation on the estimate, that for every 10,000 coloured labourers introduced, there would, in three years from this time, be 10,000 more whites in the country."

Sir Frederick Milner.

Now, I do not think I shall be making a very bold assertion if I say that in this matter Lord Milner, with all his great experience, is likely to be a better judge than the Leader of the Opposition. I might almost, I think, venture to assert that he is a better judge than even the hon. Member for the Isle of Wight (Major Seely). Undoubtedly the principal object of importing Asiatic labour is to increase the white population, and to give them greater facilities for making a decent living. Hon. Members who talk about shutting out white labour might turn their attention to the injury done to white labour in this country by the dumping down of 80,000 foreign aliens, the riff-raff of Europe, many of them criminals, who compete at starvation wages, and in many cases take the bread out of the mouths of our struggling working men.

Now I turn to the accusation that by consenting to the importation of Asiatic labour we are going back to the bad old days of slavery, that Britain will cease to be the mother of the free, and other balderdash of that kind. The hon. Member for Battersea grew so extravagant on this subject in the recent debate that it struck me that he must have forgotten that he was addressing Members of this House, and imagined himself on the top of a tub addressing an audience out for a Sunday holiday in Hyde Park. Sir, I submit slavery must necessarily involve compulsion. Where is the compulsion here? Lord Rosebery in another place told us if in doubt to consult a dictionary, so I turned up slavery in a fashionable dictionary and found the following—

> "Slavery is a *status* implying perpetual servitude to the master or owner upon whom it confers the complete control and dominion over the labour, actions, acquisition, and person of the slave and his offspring."

I was particularly struck, in reading the report of the proceedings of the Legislative Council, with the care that was taken in defining the exact position that the labourer would be in, and in taking precautions that he should know the details of his contract before he consented to come and again on his arrival. Every labourer will be an absolutely free agent, the exact terms of his contract will be explained to him. Every care will be taken for his comfort on the journey. Villages suitable to his mode of life will be erected for him prepared by those who know Asiatic customs and habits. In case of ill-treatment he has the same remedies at law as the white man, and the wages for which he contracts will be paid to him, and at the end of his service he will be taken home again free of expense and with a nice little pile of savings to add to his comfort at home. If he does not like his job he can give it up, but in this case he will have to pay a penalty as compensation, just as an English labourer has to pay for it if he breaks a contract he has entered into. Again I ask, where does the slavery come in? Was not Lord Milner justified in saying to the deputation that waited on him, that it was a cruel thing that the whole British population of the colony, standing on the same level of culture and civilisation and animated by the same love of freedom and justice as people at home, should be wrongly and absurdly accused of a desire to introduce slavery. It was a monstrous abuse of language to apply such a term to the arrangement made to introduce unskilled labour. Some hon. Members seem to think that a Chinaman cannot look after his own interests. If they knew as much about Chinamen as I do, they would realise that it would take a very cute Englishman to get the better of even a Chinese labourer in a matter of business. Talk about slavery, I could take hon. Members to some of the sweating dens in their own country where they would see something like slavery. The life of a Chinese indentured labourer will be a paradise to what some of our own fellow-citizens go through. It would be well, I think, if hon. Members opposite, instead of casting foul aspersions on their own kith and kin in South Africa, would look nearer home and try to do something to better the lot of the white slaves in our great cities. In the last debate on this question the Colonial Secretary, to make assurance doubly sure, and to guard against any possibility of injustice, gave pledges to this House that every Chinaman who contracts shall fully understand the nature of his contract and the arrangements for his comfort, and that at the port of entry the conditions of service shall be again fully explained to him; that a village carefully prepared by those who know Asiatic habits and customs shall be prepared for him; that no transfer from one employer to another shall be without his consent, and that a labourer may break his contract subject to making good the cost incurred and a reasonable penalty for pecuniary damage caused thereby. In the Paper presented to us to-day, we see that all these pledges are now embodied in the Ordinance. Nay, more, that in the event of the labourer breaking his contract, all the penalty demanded will be that he should refund the money expended on him and pay his journey home. Everything that human ingenuity can suggest has been done to safeguard the interests of the labourer. In the face of all this evidence, I say again it is childish and ridiculous to apply the term slavery to the employment offered the Chinese under this Ordinance.

I would say one word about the capital which has been made of the protests by the Prime Ministers of Australia and New Zealand. They would have done better, like Canada, to have attended to their own affairs. Mr. Karri Davies, an Australian who did splendid service throughout the war, in his letter to *The Times* states that his efforts to build up business relations between the Commonwealth of Australia and South Africa have been greatly imperilled by this unwarrantable interference on the part of the Australian Premier, to whom he offers some salutary advice, in bidding him to mind his own business. I know that no arguments on this side will avail with hon. Gentlemen opposite. With them it is a Party question, and, as some of them have remarked in my hearing, it is the best card they have played yet. So it may be for a time, but misrepresentations have an unpleasant habit of coming home to roost, so that they may yet lose more than they have gained. I cannot help hoping that some of those Members on our side who abstained from voting on the last occasion, not because they disagreed with the Government, but because they feared their constituencies, will vote straight this time. We are told that any of us who support the Government would not do so if we could vote by ballot. I resent this insinuation, and I do not believe it is true of any single Member of our Party. For myself, I can say that if I conscientiously differed from the Government on a great national question I should not for one moment hesitate to record my vote according to my convictions. It is because I believe from my heart that the Government is right in advising the King to sanction the Ordinance, because I believe if they did not do so they would be guilty of a grievous blunder if not a crime, because I believe that by this means and this means alone prosperity can be restored to South Africa, by which alone we can reap the fruit of the hardly won victory which has cost us so many valuable lives and such a wealth of treasure, that I now give my enthusiastic support to the Government.

*MR. HAVILAND BURKE (King's County, Tullamore): In the course of this debate, as in the course of others, I have been struck by the unreality of many of the arguments used. I remember the time—only three years ago—when we were told that the Transvaal was groaning under an intolerable and corrupt oligarchy, that the mining industry was ruined, and that the only hope of saving it from ruin was the supremacy of British rule. But what have we now? At the present time, according to the Johannesburg special correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette,* there is no security for life or property in that place; there is sandbagging, garotting, robbing with violence in broad daylight, and this under the enlightened rule which you have substituted for that of the poor Dutchmen whom you have trampled out, but who at least kept things going there. Down to the eve of the war the mines were paying good dividends and there was an abundance of labour; but during the war you armed the natives against the Boers and gave them war medals and much money, and when after the war you attempted to reduce their wages, they struck and said they were not going to work for less. That is the natural and inevitable outcome of what was done as regards the Kaffirs during the three years of war. I do not think that the Chinese can be permanently kept as menials, as mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. That is against the experience of all the Colonies. No one claims that the Kaffir is fit for much more than menial work, but the Chinaman is one of the finest craftsmen of the whole world. Wherever he has got, under no matter what pretences, it has never been possible to confine him to any particular place. He can live down and starve out any English working man; he is thrifty, he is hard working, and he never dreams of the scale of living upon which the humblest unskilled labourer in this country very properly insists. I heard with immense surprise to-night the assurance with which we were told that this Ordinance was approved by an overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of the Transvaal. What proof can the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Colonies give for that assurance, but what he calls the Legislative Council? Any hon. Member of this House can be ordered to leave South Africa at twenty-four hours notice if Lord Milner so pleased, as can be shown by referring to page 18 of the appendix, and if he refused he is subject to penalties ranging from a £500 fine to a term of six months or one year's imprisonment with hard labour. Lord Milner is a Satrap with powers as absolute as any placed in the hands of police inspectors in Odessa, Moscow, or St. Peterburg to-day. I remember the right hon. Gentleman talking with cheap pathos and cheap bathos about the members of this Legislative Council working themselves to the bone. I think they are in a better way to work the Transvaal and the British taxpayer to the marrow, and I think as regards the Legislative Council it would be better to dispense with the hypocrisy and humbug of bringing it to the House as in any degree representing public opinion. Anyone who looks at that Council and its constitution should treat it with General Botha's honest scorn, and not acknowledge it in any degree as being a representative tribunal of any sort or kind.

There is another question in this matter, and hon. Gentlemen opposite have caused me to refer to it by having pumped up their indignation. They repudiated the notion of all this business being the work of foreign financiers. One hon. Gentleman said we were opposing our kith and kin, but anyone looking at the patronymics of the distinguished capitalists who promised the late Secretary of State to underwrite the loan for £10,000,000, which they did not underwrite at all, must know they want to run a British colony, not only on the cheap, but on the dirt cheap. The trail of alien financiers is slimed all over the map of South Africa. They are a horde of hook-nosed, beetle-browed, and beady-eyed foreigners, who tell us that places like Canada and New Zealand ought to mind their own business. Then the Secretary of State for the Colonies endorses that sentiment and also tells us that places like Australia and New Zealand should mind their own business; that they are good enough to supply money and men; to supply food for powder for the Boer war, but that they must mind their own business if they object to Chinese immigration. I object entirely to the statements of hon. Gentlemen opposite who talk about destitute aliens when there are so many affluent aliens in South Africa, and I say that all the poor Poles, or Russian and German Jews landed annually in London have not done one fraction of the harm to the honour and credit of this Empire that has been done by men who have no country, and no flag, whose only horizon is the Stock Exchange, whose ledger is their only conscience, and who have no other thought, from the rising of the sun to its going down, but to make money out of the country they have dragged in the mire and exploited all the time.

I want now to say a few words as to the ethics of the case. We have heard a great deal too much about £. s. d., and I decline to admit that a great public question like this is to be judged by whether money is to be gained or lost. There are two points of view when we come to the ethics of the case. The first is the Chinese point, and here I should like to coin a word after the fashion of the late Colonial Secretary and ask the House to think "Chinesally." I want to ask what living creature on the face of God's earth can you imagine to be more absolutely helpless than a wretched Asiatic brought from goodness knows how far, without anything but a smattering of our language, without a trace of knowledge of our laws, and without any power of appeal to any influential man of his own race? You do not even grant him the right of signing for a week, but hedge him about with the most cruel regulations to which he has to put his own translation or interpretation. And what does that mean? Let us consider that only last year the great Land Bill introduced by the Government was going through this House. Let us remember the way we all interpreted one of the chief clauses, dealing with the "bonus" for the owner for the time being, and which was made "pie" of by a Dublin Court in such a manner that an amended Act is necessary to remedy the defect. Are we to understand that the Chinese labourers are to be at the mercy of any interpretation put before them? I say that this Ordinance is a slavery Ordinance. Hon. Gentlemen opposite may not like the name, but it is always best to call a spade a spade, and I look upon this Ordinance as slavery pure and simple. One clause in it enables the Chinese labourer to be transferred from one employer to another without his consent being asked or obtained. That is a thing that you would not allow in the case of a boy apprenticed in England. It is "cattle trading" pure and simple. I must say that I prefer honest slavery to snuffling cant. If I had the disposal of a slave I would rather hand him over to anyone than a mining corporation, because in the case of an individual slave you can frame laws to safeguard his person to a certain extent, but when you get a network of officials, and a man has no one to deal with directly, but has to go from pillar to post, and weeks elapse before he can make his claim heard—let alone make it good—you have no guarantee whatever for his humane treatment. I say that the old days of slavery in America, as portrayed in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," were better, purer, and more honest than those which the Colonial Secretary now seeks to thrust upon us.

The right hon. Gentleman talks about these wretched Chinamen bringing their wives and families with them, but he knows very well that if any man on these Benches were to tackle that problem—as it will have to be tackled—in straightforward and plain English language, the ladies' gallery would have to be cleared. The right hon. Gentleman knows that such a thing as a Chinaman taking his wife and family to any English colony is practically unknown, and that the exceptions are so rare that they are not worth mentioning. The compound system would never have been tolerated for one moment in the Southern States of America. Let us lay no flattering unction to our souls about indentured labour and freedom of contract. It is intended that the Chinese shall be slaves, and slaves they will be unless you allow them the alternative of being free men, and in that case they will starve out the best English working man. To make them slaves will mean the introduction of a cancer into your political system. One argument is that they will get better wages in South Africa than they can obtain in China. Exactly the same argument was put forward by the slave traders of South America, who contended that negroes were on the whole far better off in the States as slaves than in their native Africa, were they were so liable to be tortured and massacred every now and then. I hold with the view expressed by the most enlightened and patriotic citizens of the United States of America that when you come to talk about slavery or anything approximating to it, it is not so much the suffering inflicted on the slave as the moral degradation inflicted on the man who does the slave driving that has to be considered. A great statesman has well said that despotism is a power which corrupts both heart and understanding, and great as may be the cruelties which will be endured by the Chinese imported into South Africa they will work infinitely more harm and havoc on the whole moral character not only of the people of South Africa but of hon. Members of this House who vote for it. If this question could be decided by my private vote, and if I wished to inflict an indelible stain on the records of a great Empire and a great Parliament, I certainly should vote for introducing slavery into South Africa.

Sir HARRY SETON-KARR (St. Helens): The hon. Member has appealed to class prejudices, and his remarks would have been rather more effective if he had occasionally wandered from the realm of fancy into fact. I am not prepared to accept his statement that the Transvaal is in a state of anarchy.

Mr. BRYN ROBERTS: The authority is the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

Sir HARRY SETON-KARR: I am bound to say that all the speeches from the other side have been either imagination or prophesy, and have entirely lost sight of the two essential facts that half the stamps in Johannesburg at present are standing idle, and that the manual labour in the mines has been performed absolutely and entirely by half-naked blacks at wages no white man would accept. To my mind these facts are an answer to the imaginative arguments brought forward this afternoon. If white labour can be employed to advantage in the Transvaal mines, why is it not so employed at present, and why, if it is wrong to import Chinamen, who are willing at their own price to work the mines, has it not been wrong to employ the natives? Why have the Opposition not raised the question of cheap native labour before? I cannot understand the logic of their position. This question of Chinese labour has now been raised several times in this House—it was raised on the Address and again on the Motion for Adjournment. On each occasion the policy of the Government has been vindicated and the Opposition have been defeated, and since then the King has given his approval to the Ordinance. Surely there is no reason for having again raised it. Yet it has again been brought forward in such a manner that if it is carried it will involve the resignation of the Government and of Lord Milner. But they are not going to be defeated. Why should the House of Commons disregard the expressed wishes of the colony and interfere in its domestic affairs? The Transvaal is supposed to be a self-governing colony? Why is it not considered to be fit to manage its own affairs? Because the Opposition have discovered that the subject is one which, if they throw a little romance over it and idealise a little, forms a very good Party cry. A well-known Radical has recently done me the honour to visit my constituency, and in addressing a meeting of about 2,000 miners has argued that there is no difference between introducing Chinese labour into South Africa and introducing it into Lancashire. Will anyone seriously argue that in this House? [OPPOSITION cries of "Yes."] Well, would they expect anyone to believe them? Reference has been made to the opinions of trades union leaders. I know something of their views and I have great confidence in the intelligence of my own constituents. I do not for a moment believe that the most responsible Labour leaders accept the kind of argument to which we have listened to-night. Scorn has been thrown on the contention that this is a money question. We know perfectly well that the industries of this country and the wage-earning capacity of its inhabitants are, to a considerable extent, dependent on the prosperity of the Colonies. The working men know that the prosperity of the Transvaal is absolutely dependent on the prosperity of the mining industry, and that by the circumstances of the case the mines cannot be worked except by native labour, now largely imported from Portuguese East Africa, or by labour corresponding to it—Chinese labour. I am not in the least afraid of the use which is being made of this question throughout the country; I have desired to take this opportunity of expressing my firm conviction that this vote of censure and this opposition to the wishes of one of our Colonies are simply items in what is nothing more nor less than a Party move. Why did we lose the American Colonies? Because we tried to govern them from Downing Street. But this is a great deal more than a money question. In it is involved the self-governing idea of this great Empire.

I have not heard a single argument based on any authoritative statement which convinces me that it is not the opinion of a large majority of the people of the Transvaal that the importation of Chinese labour is an absolute necessity. If the Opposition could show that this desire was in any way based on a misconception they would go a long way towards convincing Members on this side of the truth of their contentions. If I thought the Ordinance was going to bring about a state of slavery or that the importation was not really desired by the white men of the Transvaal. I would not support the Government on this occasion. But I am absolutely convinced in the opposite direction. Let me state briefly why I propose to support the Government in this matter. In the first place, because I believe that it is absolutely necessary to save the Transvaal from practical insolvency that further cheap labour should be imported to work the mines. I also believe that it is absolutely necessary for the economic prosperity of the colony, that the colony really desires it, and that if it is done it will lead to the employment of more white men. We are told that for every 10,000 Chinamen imported 5,000 white men will have to be employed in the higher classes of labour. ["Oh."] I do not bind myself to the exact proportions, but I am convinced that if Chinamen are imported a much larger number of white men will have to be employed. A great deal has been said about the competition with white labour and the necessity for employing white labour. I have seen some of our Colonies, and I believe not only that it would be impossible to employ white men there because it would not pay, but that it would be a very unwise thing to do. Where we have native and coloured races under our control it is necessary that we should preserve our racial superiority. No self-respecting white man will work at a job alongside a coloured man, partly because he cannot afford to accept the same rate of wages, his standard of living being higher, and also because he would thereby be dragged down to the level of the black man, who wears no clothes, and who is only too glad when he has earned enough money to buy two or three wives to live for the remainder of his life on his wives' earnings. Hon. Members appear to suggest that white men could go and work amongst these men and still preserve their superiority. If such an idea as that was carried out it would do very great harm to our rule in all the dominions of this Empire, and it would attract into the mines a class of white men who are most undesirable, whom I think the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition alluded to as always being at variance with the local authorities. That kind of man we do not want to encourage in any of our industries, and that is the only kind of man who would work in our mines under the conditions I have described. These are some of the reasons why I propose to support His Majesty's Government to-night. I believe that if this vote of censure is carried, as I feel perfectly certain it will not be, the effects would be far-reaching, and we should have inflicted another blow upon our supremacy in South Africa. By adopting this Motion we should only be showing how blind we are to the real opinions and feelings of those people in South Africa we are going to rule, and telling them practically that we are going to rule them from Downing Street. I shall take no part or action of that kind, and I heartily hope that this vote of censure will be rejected by a large majority.

MAJOR SEELY (Isle of Wight): If I take part in this discussion it will be for only a very few moments because I have detained the House upon this question on a previous occasion. [Cries of "Hear, hear!"] I think upon this question we misunderstand each other in a way that I have never seen paralleled since I entered this House. It is a strange thing that the Imperial Party, to which I thought I belonged [Loud MINISTERIAL cheers]—I quite accept the sneer—should be the first to howl down one who pleads, as I loudly plead, against adopting a course in the Transvaal which will be most hateful to Australia and New Zealand, the two colonies that have rendered most invaluable aid in the acquisition of that country. This is an aspect of the case which I know does commend itself to a large proportion of those who are opposing this Ordinance, and I sympathise with their views. I sympathise with the view of those who believe that this importation of Chinese labour will render the making of South Africa a white man's country impossible. The point which appeals to me and makes me appeal to hon. Members is that after all Australia and New Zealand did render us invaluable help in winning these new colonies in South Africa. [MINISTERIAL interruptions.] I am sorry that my own Party should be the first to refuse to listen to a voice uplifted in loud protest against the course which the Government have chosen to adopt. I have said there is a misunderstanding. [Renewed MINISTERIAL interruptions.]

MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL (Oldham): Mr. Speaker, I rise to order. I am quite unable to hear what my hon. friend is saying owing to the vulgar clamour maintained by the Conservative Party.

MR. SPEAKER: I appeal to hon. Gentlemen of all Parties to preserve quiet, whether they agree with the argument or not.

SIR GEORGE BARTLEY (Islington, N.): Allow me to say, Mr. Speaker, that the vulgarest expression came from this hon. Gentleman (pointing to the hon. Member for Oldham).

MR. SPEAKER: I did not refer to the nature of the expressions, whether vulgar or not. I referred to the clamour.

MAJOR SEELY: I deeply regret that I should be the cause of any dispute in this House between hon. Members. I do ask my hon. friends to believe me when I say that this Ordinance is not a wise one. I did think hon. Members on this side would be generous enough to listen to a very few brief words which I desire to say in order to justify my action. I wish at once to make plain the special claim I have to speak to-night, and it is that while my hon. friends think that I suppose I may gain largely by my opposition to the importation of Chinese labour—[MINISTERIAL cries of "Hear, hear!"] I am glad they say "Hear, hear"; I may say that I believe my opposition to the importation of Chinese labour will be the cause of my leaving this House. [MINISTERIAL cheers and OPPOSITION cries of "No, no."] I have this day tendered my resignation to my constituents [MINISTERIAL cheers and OPPOSITION counter-cheers], because I do not think it is fair that I should continue to oppose the Government with all my power without giving them an opportunity of turning me out if they disapprove of my action. From what I can hear I gather that I shall be opposed from so many quarters that I shall probably not return to this

House, and, therefore, as this may be the last time I shall address my hon. friends I trust they will listen to me for five minutes.

My right hon. friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies has accused me of ignorance in this matter. ["Hear, hear!"] It may very well be that the accusation is a just one, but it seems to me that the right hon. Gentleman does not seem to know some of the things which would lead one to form a just estimate of the truth in this matter. We are told that, in point of fact, the importation of Chinese labour will increase the number of white skilled labourers in the Transvaal. I notice that some of my hon. friends cheer that remark. It is presumed that that will be a reason why the voters in this country will accept this proposal to which on other grounds they are opposed. I have to point out to my right hon. friend that this statement is totally at variance with the facts of the case, because, although he may suppose that his assertion in this House will induce hon. Members behind him to believe it, I assure him that in every meeting I have addressed—I have addressed many, and if I live I shall address a great many more—I found the opposite to be the case, and at one meeting I was informed by a gentleman in the audience that there are more white men employed in the mines at the present time than there were before the war. That is in point of fact the case, and I challenge my right hon. friend to deny it. He does not deny it, because it is true. If more white men are employed now than before the war, although there are fewer natives, does it not look as if the tendency of natural causes was to put more white men into the positions of working machinery where black men worked before? [Cries of "Oh, oh!"] I notice that this view does not commend itself to some hon. Members, but they had better make haste and find an answer to that question, because if they cannot find one, I can assure them that the strongest argument they have will fall beneath their feet. Can my right hon. friend explain why more white men are now employed in the mines than was the case before the war? There is nothing but misunderstanding in this matter If you try to prove, as I have proved, and as I think hon. Members admit—[MINISTERIAL cries of "No, no!"] Does any hon. Member deny that there are not more white men employed in the mines now than was the case before the war? And when I am trying to prove that statement I am told that I know nothing of this subject. When I try to show that our Colonies have seriously protested against this Ordinance, I am told that I am doing it for electioneering purposes. I would plead to hon. Members not to tell Australia and New Zealand that this House considers that their protest was made solely from electioneering reasons. I assure hon. Members, from what I know, that the protests of our self-governing Colonies were not based upon electioneering reasons, and you bitterly injure their feelings, and you may do harm which you can never redress, if you refuse for one moment to listen to their voice in this matter. If you try to prove that it is wrong to barter liberty for a time in a way which any Englishman is not permitted to do, or even for any British Indian subject to do, you are told that you are a sentimentalist. Can anyone here deny that the Government of India have refused to permit British Indian subjects to submit to the terms of this Ordinance? [AN HON. MEMBER: Do not answer him.]

MR. LYTTELTON: They have never been asked.

MAJOR SEELY: Then why did the right hon. Gentleman on 16th January telegraph Lord Milner in these words?—

> "The provisions of this Ordinance, if applied to British Indian subjects, would probably be objected to."

MR. LYTTELTON: This Ordinance does not purport to deal with miners coming from India, because India does not provide miners.

MAJOR SEELY: What, then, is the reason of the telegram? As a matter of fact the British Indian Government did object to allow British Indian subjects to submit themselves to terms far more favourable than those of this Ordinance.

They insisted that British Indian subjects should not go to any country where they were deprived of the rights of citizenship. That is the reason of the right hon. Gentleman's telegram. It is, after all, a proud boast for England that wherever the British flag flies there all persons who set foot in that territory shall have the ordinary rights of citizenship. It may be necessary that this thing should be done, but I wholly deny it. In any case it must be admitted that it is deplorable to do this, for it outrages the sentiments of the people of this country and of the self-governing Colonies, and it is disgraceful that it should be adopted without any attempt being made to ascertain the real feelings of the people of the Transvaal. The late Colonial Secretary in the most solemn way stated that he would not sanction the introduction of Chinese labour unless he had reason to know that the people were in favour of it. But no effort has been made to ascertain their opinion. Why did the Colonial Secretary telegraph to Lord Milner only a month ago asking how long it would take to have a *referendum*? It was because he felt it was impossible to say that the people of the Transvaal were in favour of the scheme. [Cheers, and some interruption from MINISTERIALISTS.] The only constitutional way of ascertaining the wishes of the people is through the ballot box. My hon. friend may laugh, but after all there is something in the argument, and if you are going now for the first time to absolutely refuse to allow the people of a white colony to have a say in regard to what race shall live there, then I say you will bitterly regret the day. [MINISTERIAL interruptions.] Hon. Members behind me may think that in endeavouring to prevent me addressing the House they are serving their cause. [AN HON. MEMBER: Go over to the other side.] An hon. Member behind me says, "Go over to the other side." If there is any consistency in hon. Members it is they who should sit on the other side. [MINISTERIAL interruptions.] The two gentlemen who wrote my election address for me in my absence have told me that had I supported the introduction of Chinese labour they not only would not have nominated me, but would have voted against me. Though hon. Gentlemen behind me may now endeavour to howl me down, I know very well that the time will come when possibly they may remember that when one appeals to the voice of the Colonies and the voice of the country one sometimes appeals to things which endure. If I should be returned to the House again I will continue to endeavour in my humble way to uphold the cause of justice and of freedom.

MR. ROBSON (South Shields): We have had a good many references to-night to Party feeling, but I do not believe we have ever had in this House such an exhibition of Party feeling, as that which has been shown by the Party opposite, during the observations of the hon. Member who has just sat down.

MR. SPEAKER: May I suggest that hon. Members on both sides of the House should endeavour to preserve order, and allow the debate to proceed.

MR. ROBSON: I was alluding to the hon. and gallant Member opposite, who I think has a unique claim, not only upon this House, but also upon the country for the services he has performed in South Africa, and the courage he has shown as a Member of this House, and the Party opposite. The hon. and gallant Member, at any rate, is willing to do, and has sufficient courage to do, that which other Members of his Party are extremely nervous about doing, that is, he is willing to face his constituents. He is willing to meet his constituents, and to take the opinion of the country upon a matter as to which the country has certainly not been consulted, and what is his reward? He is refused a hearing by his own Party, upon the last occasion upon which he can address the House. His reward is to have withheld from him the ordinary courtesy which is extended to hon. Members of this House—[Cries of "Question"]—and I think it would be a misfortune if this fact were not observed by the country. [Renewed cries of "Question, Question."] We have been told that this is a Party move on our part, but we see plainly now on which side the Party feeling lies.

I propose to make a few observations upon this question, and I will cease when it is intimated to me by the right hon Gentleman below me that I have exhausted the time placed at my disposal. There are one or two observations, which I should like to make, which may clear the ground a little before I deal with the general argument. I do not propose to devote much time to the point which has been dealt with in nearly the whole of the speeches of the hon. Members opposite, which is, that the Government in this case are merely following precedent and are only doing what has been before. If it be the case that on previous occasions and under other Ministries we have had white labour displaced by alien labour which is submitted to the degradation and wholesale imprisonment involved in the system of compounds, then it is high time that the people of England knew what has happened, and hon. Members ought to do all they can to stop it. The Colonial Secretary is very indignant because people have applied the name of slavery to the system which he proposes to establish, because let the House remember it is the right hon. Gentleman who proposes to establish it. Do not let us be carried away by the idea that the responsibility for this Ordinance lies mainly with the Transvaal, because it lies with us. Some hon. Members have spoken of the impropriety of our interfering with the internal affairs of the colony. At the present time we are responsible for the government of the colony and it is this House which is actually the governing body of the Transvaal. Therefore it behoves us to be very careful as to the system which it is proposed to establish there. If these men who are going to be imported are not slaves, does the right hon. Gentleman call them free men? Are they to be free during their period of indenture? It is idle to contend that they are to be anything of the sort. It is true that every Englishman parts with his freedom so far when he signs a contract, but he does not part with his general liberty. Those in the neighbourhood of these compounds will not be subjected to the same pains and penalties. These are features, although they may not be extreme forms of slavery, which partake of slavery. The Colonial Secretary is wrong in supposing that slavery is confined to these extreme forms of servitude which he has mentioned. The right hon. Gentleman will now see why it is that this system of Chinese servitude is described as slavery. The Slavery Abolition Act was extended from the known forms of permanent servitude to all kinds of servitude wherever workmen parted with their general liberties. That is a true definition of slavery, so far as it has been made out, and that test undoubtedly brings the methods now proposed within the fair and honest definition of slavery. [Ministerial interruptions.] It is quite true that this form of slavery is free from some of the objections which were applied to other familiar forms of slavery, but this form of servitude of which I complain is now to be established whether we like it or not. [Cries of "Divide, divide."] This form of slavery is to be established because experts have declared that you cannot go on working the mines at a profit in South Africa unless you have cheap labour.

It is also a question of the class of labour, and upon this point we are told that the opinion of the mine-owners in South Africa is practically unanimous. [Ministerial cries of "Oh, oh!"] If that is not the case then the whole argument fails. I do not propose to give hon. Members my opinion, but I will read the opinion of mine-owners themselves. They say that Transvaal mining is a thing by itself and that it cannot be properly compared with mining elsewhere where white labour is used and profitably used. I will tell the House what was said on behalf of these mine-owners before the Commission appointed by the Boer Government in 1897. In 1896 the Boer Government inquired into the shortage of labour, and the Johannesburg Chamber of Mines arranged for evidence to be given before that Commission just as they have done in regard to the more recent Commission. The Johannesburg Chamber of Mines sent to give evidence the consulting engineer of the great firms in the Transvaal, and he declared that the United States Mines were similar to those on the Rand, more especially those in California, where the veins were similar, and the mines were of great depth. He stated that the cost of working such mines as these could with all fairness be compared with the mines on the Rand. This gentleman went into detail, and he said that the wages paid to the Californian miners were less than the wages paid to the miners in the Transvaal, and he further stated the salient feature was to be found in the fact that notwithstanding the employment of white labour, mines which just about paid on the Rand were made to yield a large profit in California. I think that disposes of the argument upon which the Government rest their case, because undoubtedly the mining industry of South Africa has reached a point at which it must make a choice. White men will not work with the black men, and it is essential that the mine-owners should make up their minds whether they will choose white or yellow labour. I think it is the duty of this Government to insist upon the mine-owners choosing as their alternative white labour. If there is a place in the whole of our dominions where white labour is necessary for the safety of the colony it is the Transvaal. There is only one means of getting white labour, and it is for this House to sternly refuse any sort of State aid to mine-owners for procuring alien cheap labour. Instead of taking this course the Government has chosen to adopt the discredited evidence of mine-owners, evidence which is discredited by their own testimony of seven years ago, and we are now to have a great colony worked with cheap labour instead of securing our own position there, and adding to the prosperity of our own working classes. I am sorry I have detained the House so long, but I thought it was worth while giving a piece of evidence which I hope hon. Members will keep in their minds.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, who was received with loud cheers and cries of "Divide," said: I was glad to be in agreement with one sentiment which I heard from the hon. and learned Gentleman who has just sat down—namely, that one of the great objects which this House should have in view is the augmentation, if possible a great augmentation, in the amount of the white population in South Africa, as compared with the population of any other race, be they black or be they yellow. I believe in that sentiment everybody will agree, although I admit that some of the arguments which I thought I caught from the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite appeared to me to savour more of protectionist views than I should have expected to hear from the unimpeachable orthodoxy of the other side of the House. I understood that their view was that everything should give way to buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest market. I had thought that, following those whom they claim to be their acknowledged ancestors, they believe that labour, like other commodities, be the country of its origin what it may, should be sold in any other country at the highest price, and bought by the employers of labour at the cheapest price. [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh" and continued interruption.] I had erroneously supposed that the doctrine undoubtedly held by Mr. Cobden and his predecessors that there was no distinction to be drawn between nation and nation, between those who had to sell labour and those who had to sell goods, and the doctrine of free exchange and free imports, was of universal application. [Cheers and NATIONALIST cries of "Divide."]

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Why did you not keep order for Seely?

Mr. SPEAKER: I would appeal to the House to give the right hon. Gentleman a hearing. No one can suggest for a moment that he gave any encouragement to hon. Gentlemen to interrupt the hon. Member for the Isle of Wight. It was because considerable provocation was given. I trust that hon. Members will now allow the First Lord of the Treasury to proceed.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I can say that my hon. friend the Member for the Isle of Wight is the last Gentleman who desires this particular form of interruption, and I think hon. Gentlemen opposite will do me the justice at all events to say that, whoever be the speaker, on whatever side of the House he speaks, and whatever sentiment he gives utterance to, I have invariably, during my long career in this House, done my best to obtain for him a fair hearing.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: No.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Is the hon. Gentleman prepared to deny that? I am sure he will, on reflection, come to the conclusion that his denial is unjust, and he will admit that he belongs to a Party whose opinions have often been unpopular with the majority of the House, and never in any circumstances have I failed to exert such small influence as I possess to obtain for him and his friends a hearing.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND said his complaint was that the right hon. Gentleman did not appeal to his followers.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Gentleman is mistaken. I did make an appeal to the best of my ability, and every Gentleman in the House who was a witness of what occurred knows that what I now say is strictly within the mark.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I did not hear that.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I accept the hon. Member's explanation. I am sorry he did not hear it. Before coming to what is more strictly relevant to the subject before the House, I venture earnestly to point out to the House that tactics of interruption never can be successful, because even the smallest minority in the House can make any debate impossible if they choose. I am to be followed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Fife, and it would be the easiest matter in the world for hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House not to allow a single word to be heard. It is also perfectly easy for hon. Gentlemen opposite to prevent a single word of what I desire to say from being heard. I am convinced that every Gentleman, on whatever side he may sit, desires that this House should remain a deliberative Assembly, and, being a deliberative Assembly, the arguments on each side should have a fair hearing.

I will proceed briefly to summarise what appear to me to be the leading points in this debate. I do not think it is denied, except by a few speakers, certainly not by the learned Gentleman who preceded me and by others who have spoken from that Bench, that the economic crisis in the Transvaal is of a serious character. There are those who think that if you do nothing the situation will cure itself, that if you do not provide cheap labour some happy inventor will come forward with a labour-saving machine which will prevent the mine-owners requiring either Chinese labour or black labour to exploit the mines. But even the most sanguine believers in the power of invention hardly hold the view that this revolutionary discovery can be made, developed, and applied to the mines within a time which would not make it absolutely vain to hope that it would prove anything like a remedy for the serious and immediately impending evils with which that industrial community is threatened. We, therefore, I will not say by universal consent, but by almost universal consent, have got to deal with a great and immediate difficulty, which may conceivably find its own cure in the course of years, but which certainly cannot be cured in the course of months except by the bringing to the mines of some form of labour which is to replace the unquestionable shortage which now exists. [AN HON. MEMBER: No.] Well, some hon. Gentleman there, I am too blind to see who it is, doubts my statement, but I do not think he can know much about the present condition of South Africa. Even those who have been most violent against the proposals of the Government have been ready to admit that those proposals, at all events, are not intended to redress a purely imaginary and illusory difficulty, but, for good or for evil, are intended to meet an actual and practical difficulty. Then the only question is, supposing the introduction of Chinese labour would really meet the difficulty, whether the remedy is not worse than the disease—whether, in other words, it is our business to compel the Transvaal to undergo a great commercial crisis rather than admit the Chinese under the conditions proposed by my right hon. friend who sits near me. That is the actual problem which this House is asked to solve to-night.

Now, surely everybody must admit after the debate to-night, in spite of what fell from the hon. and learned Gentleman who preceded me, that after the speech of my right hon. friend the Colonial Secretary, that admirable speech, the accusation that we have initiated a system of slavery in British colonies falls absolutely to the ground. I know that colonial opinion, Australian and other opinion, has been brought before us showing the iniquity of our proceedings. Well, I confess I sometimes wish that hon. Gentlemen would consider colonial opinion a little more than they do. There certainly have been questions on which I understand the Colonies were even more unanimous than they are on this when but scant attention has been paid to their views. But, however that may be, let us consider whether there is indeed the smallest ground for this amazing charge that Lord Milner, that Sir Arthur Lawley, that the leaders of public opinion in the Transvaal, that my right hon. friend, and other English gentlemen have been deliberately conspiring to introduce slavery into one of His Majesty's colonies. It may be true, but I think some proof is required. And I ask what that proof is. Surely this use, or misuse, of terms is becoming rather a serious blot in our political controversy. It is almost pathetic to think that if hon. Gentlemen opposite were always compelled to use words in their habitual significance, they would be reduced to absolute silence upon platforms. If, for example, they were obliged to use the words [OPPOSITION cries of "Pro-Boer"]—I am not sure I have not seen traces of pro-Boerism to-night, but that is not what I was thinking of—if they were obliged, for example, to use the word "political test" as every historian has used it, how would they deal with the education question? Suppose they were obliged to use the words "Free trade and protection" as every political economist has used them, how would they be able to deal with the fiscal question? And if they were obliged to use the word "slavery" as every publicist has used it, how would they deal with the question of Asiatic labour? It is almost melancholy to think of the unhappy straits to which they would be reduced. And their situation becomes the more difficult when the House, now fuller than when my right hon. friend spoke, bears in mind the previous course of previous Governments, Liberal and Conservative, in the matter of imported labour into British colonies. We have heard the word "slavery" and all that it implies used about this proceeding. My right hon. friend has explained that, with insignificant differences, precisely the same regulations have been used by British Guiana, Trinidad, British Columbia, Australia, and other British colonies. Of course, I do not deny there are differences. All I am anxious to know is whether the differences are relevant. I understand that in the British colonies to which I have referred an imported labourer was obliged to reside on premises. There was a penalty if he was absent from those premises or from his work without leave. There was a penalty if he deserted his work. There was a penalty on anybody who harboured a deserter. When I say "was" I ought to say "is." It is in force. And he may be transferred, without his consent, from employer to employer.

SIR FRANCIS EVANS (Maidstone): In case of bankruptcy.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Not at all. The hon. Gentleman, I am afraid, was not present when my right hon. friend made his speech, or he has not got the subject up. These peculiarities in the regulations which I have mentioned represent the whole of the peculiarities which constitute slavery in the eyes of hon. Gentlemen opposite. [OPPOSITION cries of "No."] Well, is there any other? If anybody can suggest another, I should be grateful for the purposes of argument.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland): Indentured labourers are free after working hours.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Not at all. They are obliged to reside on the premises.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: Not in compounds.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Not in compounds. Well, nobody has a greater respect than I have for a highly-sensitive conscience; but a conscience which yields so rapidly to treatment that it views with horror as slavery the conditions I have described which will obtain in the Transvaal in the future and those which prevail in British Guiana—a person who can perceive in this the whole difference between slavery and freedom surely has a most strangely constituted mind. You can confine a man to the premises. Call them premises, it is freedom. Call them compounds, it is slavery. Was there ever such a preposterous pretension when you recollect that the men who started the theory that such labourers should be confined in compounds, that they could not be absent without paying a penalty, and that those who harboured them should be subjected to a penalty, are those Gentlemen opposite? They are the exemplars of this precious system of slavery which, as they truly say, is producing so great a sensation throughout the country. [OPPOSITION Cheers]. And a double title have they to be proud of it. They produced the evil and they are now reaping the benefit of it. It was their happy privilege to initiate this slavery and to make us lose elections for following in their footsteps. I feel myself far below the height of the ethics or the casuistry of the right hon. Gentlemen; and I pass on to other branches of the subject. But let me remind the House that that branch of our industrial system of which we are most proud, namely, the mercantile marine, would seem to the superficial observer—although I admit I am no expert in the matter—to have some of the elements to which hon. Gentlemen opposite object in the case of the Chinese labourers. Are they ready to dub the mercantile marine as slavery? I understand that in the mercantile marine any sailor may make a contract for an unlimited number of years in which he is obliged to serve one employer. I believe that in practice the habitual number of years is three. [OPPOSITION cries of "Only for each voyage."] I am informed that in the case of a ship going to the East the ordinary contract is for three years, during which, I believe, desertion constitutes a criminal offence, under which the sailor is bound to serve one master; and remember that within the narrow compass of a ship there is not and cannot be that constant effect of public investigation which will be, I hope and believe, an adequate safeguard for any abuse within the limits of a British colony. I rather regret the necessity for this practice in the mercantile marine, but it is the necessity of the circumstances of a particular trade, and is any man going to describe our sailors as having the *status* of slaves? If they are slaves I hope we will always produce many persons of that kind to keep up the British Empire.

If I may pass from what I cannot help regarding as one of the most preposterous charges ever brought against a British Government, the next point, after the slavery point, which has attracted public attention is the effect of Chinese labour in South Africa on the British workman. I notice an extraordinary discrepancy between the arguments which hon. Gentlemen opposite bring forward on one aspect of the question and the arguments which they bring forward on another aspect of the question. When they are holding out a wholly illusory picture of a great field of employment in South Africa for the unemployed of this country, they are all in favour of protecting the British worker against the foreign competitor. But when it comes to consider the position of the British skilled workmen in the Transvaal against his foreign competitor, then there is no language which they are not ready to use against the restrictions to be employed against the Chinese. They are perfectly ready to say in the one case, "You must not go to the cheapest market for your labour, you must adhere to British labour, you must not follow the ordinary principles of free trade." But when it comes to protecting the foreman in the mines, then they say "How outrageous to allow the

Chinese to come into South Africa and not to give them every privilege of British citizenship." How can they reconcile that?

MR. MOULTON: Do not bring them in unless you treat them fairly like human beings.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Gentleman, in the interests of the Chinese, says: "Do not bring them in unless you treat them as we treat our Indian coolies in British Guiana and other places." But in whose interest does he say that? In that of the Chinese?

MR. MOULTON: Partly.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Now, does anybody seriously think that it is in the interests of the Chinese that you are going to exclude them from South Africa? Is it to please the Chinese labourer that you deprive him of the chance of earning fifteen times the wages he now earns? Is it for his benefit; is it to raise him to a higher social level. Really I confess that part of the argument of hon. Gentlemen opposite hardly seems to me, and I think is hardly considered by themselves, as worthy of a very serious answer. The truth is there is behind all this a much more important problem than we have perhaps been considering in the course of these long debates. Modern developments have reached a point at which a problem, I believe wholly new, has arisen. We are familiar in history with the imposition by a conquering race of its civilisation upon a conquered race; but we are not familiar in history with the alternative phenomenon of, I will not necessarily say inferior, but, at all events, a wholly different culture gradually percolating into society and profoundly modifying its effect. And I frankly admit that in the face of that new problem I think new doctrines ought to be expected; and I sympathise with the Australians and with the New Zealanders, not, indeed, when they promulgate purely protective views—[OPPOSITION ironical cheers]—purely protectionist views about British labour—[MINISTERIAL cheers and counter-cheers]—and the immigration of British workmen, but when they say they will not tolerate the unlimited immigration of Chinese or other alien labour, I entirely sympathise with their view. It is a new problem to be met only in that way. But then Australia and New Zealand are colonies of white men which can be permanently made and retained as colonies of white men. Is there a man in this Assembly who thinks that is true of South Africa? It may be a white man's colony in the sense that the white man can thrive there, can bring up families there, can become a permanent citizen of the colony. But can it ever be a white man's colony in the true sense of the word—that the white man is to be the greater part of the population in that colony? [AN HON. MEMBER on the OPPOSITION Benches: Yes.] Did I hear any hon. Gentleman answer that question in the affirmative? [AN HON. MEMBER on the OPPOSITION Benches: Why not?] I will tell hon. Gentlemen why it cannot be done. In Australia, for instance, the black races have died away in front of the white race—I am afraid for reasons not always creditable to the white races. But, at all events, the fact is there, and, even if I am charged with inhumanity, I cannot find it in my heart to regret it. But no such phenomenon is occurring or can occur in South Africa. The proportion at this moment in South Africa is roughly about eight blacks to one white. The blacks not only show no signs of diminution, they are steadily increasing, and they are increasing faster than the whites. They have a resisting power which neither the Red Indian in North America nor the Aboriginal in Australia has been able to show. They are there; they are going to remain there; and the problem before South Africa in the future, which, perhaps, none of us will live to see, is one which has never yet presented itself, so far as I know, in the history of mankind—namely, the problem of a great white population living there, having families there, becoming permanent residents, and yet with an incomparably larger number of a wholly different race, who of necessity, from the very nature of things, will have to do the coarse and rough labour of the community. I believe the problem will present incomparable difficulties in the future. The right hon. Member for Aberdeen said the question of the negro in the Southern States of North America was a serious difficulty.

MR. BRYCE: What I said was that the problem was a growing one.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: What is the difficulty of the relatively insignificant negro population in the United States of America compared with the difficulty which will present itself to South African statesmen when they have got to face this enormous black population and when you have a great community of whites of all classes, who, nevertheless, are, as it were, an aristocracy over a proletariat class? I do not envy those who have got to deal with that situation of the future. But how is that situation injured or affected in the smallest degree for evil by the policy of the Government? I agree that if you were to allow an unlimited importation of Chinese—if you were to allow Chinese immigration into all the colonies of South Africa and into all the trades of South Africa—a problem already sufficiently difficult would become almost impossible; for you would then have, no doubt, the white aristocracy, as I have described them, you would have the intelligent, able, thrifty, competing Chinese, and, in addition to these, you would have the thousands and millions of the black population. That serious complication is wholly avoided by the regulations of my right hon. friend. Nobody can pretend that Chinese introduced under the terms of these regulations are Chinese who are going to take any great part, after they have done their term of service, in the industrial evolution of the country. It is not so: and, difficult as the problems of the future in South Africa are, they are not going to be complicated by the introduction under these regulations of Chinese labour; and we who have got to consider not merely the remote future, but the immediate present, would be fools indeed if we were to allow all the disasters immediately consequent on a deficient supply of this labour because we feared another danger against which we have amply safeguarded.

Sir, I do not know that it has been done seriously, but more than one speaker on the other side has hinted that the statements made by us to show that you cannot get the white man and the black man to work together on equal terms are statements made in the interests of that mysterious locality, Park Lane, and have no relation to the facts of African life. Unfortunately the theories of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, that all men were born equal, have been refuted in this, as in many other instances, by the advance of science. Men are not born equal. They cannot be made equal by education extending over generation after generation within the ordinary historical limit. The differences between one family and another of mankind lie deep in the remote and unfathomable past, and it is folly to suppose that your petty educational regulations, be they what they may, can obliterate distinctions deep-seated under the laws of nature. And that being so, you will not get the white man and the black man to work together as equals; and if you could effect the impossible you would injure not only the white man but the black man, and not only the black man but the white man. Do not let us suppose that this is the ideal, as I should almost have guessed from the speech of the right hon. Member for Aberdeen.

MR. BRYCE: I said exactly the opposite.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I will not quarrel with him about that. At all events, we are agreed—happy be the day—that this unbridgable abyss separates the two races. Do not let us aim at an impossible ideal, and do not let us suppose that any conceivable scheme of immigration of white labour is to turn South Africa into a place where the rough work of industrial organisation is to be done by the white instead of by the black. If I be right in these views, what are we to say as to the course pursued by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite? The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition was asked in an interjection what he would do if he were suddenly returned to power. He very wisely said he would wait and see. The answer was a prudent one, but I will be a more communicative oracle than the right hon. Gentleman. I know exactly what the right hon. Gentleman would do, or try to do, if he were returned as the result of to-night's division. He would do exactly what we are doing at the present time. He would then suddenly discover that there is something more to be done than to make vague and irrelevant speeches about slavery. He would feel that he had to deal with an immediate and practical problem; and what is that problem? It is one of the most difficult and one of the most important problems with which this Assembly and this country has got to deal. It is how we are to use our illimitable technical power over our dependencies for their advantage and for ours. Let us for a moment consider what we should think of another Assembly sitting, let us say, at the Cape, some body not responsible to us, not elected by us, who were to turn round to us and say to us: — "Your staple industry, the industry on which your prosperity depends, is one which no doubt is in a very bad way; but devote your mind to labour-saving machinery, alter, repudiate the policy you think would succed in putting it on a sound basis—do all this, not in obedience to any fundamental moral law, not in conformity with any standing traditions of the British Empire, not even to bring it into harmony with one political Party more than another, but in order to bring it into conformity with a transitory Party necessity of the moment." I venture to think that if such a course were taken with regard to us and our great interests, which right hon. Gentleman propose while they are that side of the House, the course they propose to take with regard to the root industry of the Transvaal, I confess I think a feeling of bitterness would arise in this country which it would take years to displace. I beg the House not to take upon itself any such appalling responsibility. I plead here not merely, not chiefly, for the capitalists, be they large or small, who have invested in the Transvaal mines; I plead for the great white population, agricultural and mining, who depend, and so far as I can see will depend for an unlimited time, on labour other than white labour; I plead for the artisans, I plead for the shopkeepers, I plead for the great body of the population of European blood whose fate in the colony depends on your decision. I ask the House whether in face of the opinion of Lord Milner — a name received with respect and admiration by everybody but the hon. Gentleman who interrupts me—I ask whether, in face of the advice of Lord Milner, of Sir Arthur Lawley, and of the great body of officials, admirable officials, who are carrying out our work in South Africa, in face of the great body of opinion of the white population, are Members of the House going to be so foolish as in a reckless moment to take an action, to initiate a change, that can have no other effect than to destroy an industry or retard the prosperity of the Transvaal and bring with it unknown and possibly irremediable evils on the constituents of society there?

Mr. ASQUITH (Fifeshire, E.): The right hon. Gentleman, in the concluding part of his speech, sought to score a dialectical point, and I suppose to terrify those who sit here by asking the Leader of the Opposition what he would do if this Motion were carried to-night. It is a simple question and it admits of a very simple answer. If the Motion were carried to-night the effect would be that the Ordinance would be disallowed and we should hear no more of it. The Prime Minister, as we all know, is a master of paradox, but I confess I have never heard him carry that enviable faculty to a greater extreme than in the opening sentences of his speech to-night. He told us that those of us who have embraced the doctrine of free trade must apply that doctrine to human beings exactly in the same sense, exactly to the same extent as we do to commodities, or that Mr. Cobden has said so. Poor Mr. Cobden! How many fallacies are now enumerated in the name of Mr. Cobden! According to the Prime Minister, if I understand his argument rightly, in Mr. Cobden's view, at any rate, slavery was a legitimate deduction from the doctrine of *laisser faire.*

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Mr. Cobden's doctrine was that every labourer, be his country what it might be, had the right to sell his labour in the dearest market, just as every manufacturer had the right to sell his commodities in the dearest market.

MR. ASQUITH: Is the Chinaman who is going to be brought into South Africa under the conditions of this Ordinance the free labourer of Mr. Cobden's imagination, who, forsooth, is selling his labour in the dearest market? I am going to deal very briefly with one or two of the arguments of the Prime Minister, but I think I can do so most conveniently by summarising in a sentence what it seems to me are the real contentions that we on this side of the House have advanced in favour of this Motion. I believe we all start—even the Prime Minister himself, though I did not hear him make the admission—I believe we all start with the admission that the steps proposed by this Ordinance are *prima facie* to be regarded with regret and even with repugnance. But is it not also conceivable—I hope I shall carry hon. Gentlemen opposite with me so far—that in order to justify these steps it must, at any rate, be shown, first, that they are demanded by the clear and overwhelming body of local opinion—that is essential; next, that the steps are needed to meet a case of actual and proved necessity; and, lastly, that no one can suggest any practicable or, at any rate, any less objectionable alternative? So far we are agreed. Now, we deny on this side of the House that any one of these propositions has been made out. What is the case as regards local opinion? We have heard about the decisions of the Legislative Council, memorials, and so forth. I wish to point out that as regards local opinion the difficulty we are in is not merely that the Transvaal is not a self-governing colony with the machinery of representative institutions. There is this further difficulty—that, I suppose, of all places in the world, this is the one in which it is for the moment the least easy to get any clear and trustworthy criterion of the genuine view of the whole of the community. Why is that? Because, first of all, a considerable section of the population, including, I suppose, the bulk of the Boers, as a consequence of the war, are to a large extent for a time inarticulate. And next, what I must say I regard as a still more serious disturbance of our power to ascertain the real opinion of the community, there is no place in the British Empire where a comparatively small, but rich and highly-organised, interest possesses the same facilities, I will not say for manufacturing, but, at any rate, for manipulating, the expression of what passes as public opinion. And if that were not so, if these difficulties did not exist, and if they were not felt to exist by His Majesty's Government, why was it that the Colonial Secretary thought it right to telegraph to Lord Milner and ask whether it was not possible, by a referendum or other means, authentically to ascertain the views of the community? I need not point out to the House that the step contemplated by this Ordinance is a step which, if once taken, though it may not be irretrievable—I trust it will not—will be very difficult to retrace. How is this House to-night going to justify it without the fullest and the most authentic and the most unmistakable evidence of the consent of every section of the community, the whole course and colour of whose future may be determined by what is done here?

I cannot think that in such conditions we ought to turn a heedless ear to the feelings and remonstrances of our own self-governing Colonies. I quite agree that in ordinary circumstances Australia has no business to interfere with Canada, or Canada with Australia. But the case we are dealing with is one that is absolutely unique in our history. These Colonies came to our aid in the moment of stress and of necessity. They spilled their best blood on the soil of South Africa in the name of freedom, and, as they believed, for the purpose of enfranchisement. That gives them a title to speak. But have they not a special qualification to speak in this matter? They have had experience, a close and direct experience, which happily we have been spared, of the contact of yellow immigrant Chinese labour with the daily life of a white community. Having, as I have said, both that title gained by their co-operation and that qualification derived from particular experience, I think we should be acting very rashly if, in a matter of this kind, where the local opinion, to put it at the highest, is not authentically ascertained, we disregarded the practically unanimous sentiment of every self-governing community.

Mr. LYTTELTON: Canada.

Mr. ASQUITH: I should like to see a plebiscite taken in Canada. It is quite true that the Canadian Government have not associated themselves with the Australian Governments in the protest which they have made, but the overwhelming opinion of the people of Canada is in the same sense. The right hon. Gentleman told us just now, in an eloquent passage in his speech, of the difficulty which arises where you have white and black people necessarily living side by side and where the blacks are more numerous than the white. But I do not assent to the right hon. Gentleman's argument that under normal conditions the black population of South Africa is always going to be incomparably more numerous than the white. But whether that is so or not, and assuming it is likely to be so, you cannot do anything more likely to injuriously prejudice the future of South Africa as a community in which white people and where white ideas are to be ultimately predominant than to introduce a third race, a yellow race—as to which I am not going to make any charges, but which you are going, by the conditions under which they are introduced and under which they are to live, to put in a position of permanent debasement and degradation. I believe that in South Africa some branches of the Kaffirs show a great capacity for rising in the social and educational scale, and that with proper treatment, humane and civilised treatment, on the part of the authorities, that general elevation of the Kaffir population may be expected to go on to an indefinite degree. But this new element you are going to introduce is going to be permanently debarred from any of the civilising or humanising influences of the white population.

I want to deal with one other point—the question of necessity and the question of some practical alternative. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that the economic condition of the Transvaal is a serious one. I agree that it is. He has told us that there is a shortage of labour. So undoubtedly there is. But when you look at the economic situation of the Transvaal, and particularly when you are considering how best to deal with it and to remedy it, you must not confine your attention to the mines. So far as the mines are concerned I will venture to say that, having regard to the desolation and the cost of the war, they have shown a wonderful power of recuperation. They are producing now at the rate of £14,000,000 sterling a year — in fact, they have already got back to the level of 1898, the year before the war broke out. For a country which has been devastated for three years by war, and by all the attendant horrors of war, that seems to me a not unsatisfactory result. The seriousness of the economic situation in the Transvaal does not lie so much in the mining industry. You have got there—I agree it was started in good faith but with unduly sanguine expectations of an expanding industry—a costly Administration which at this moment, I believe I am not exaggerating when I say, costs twice as much a year as the old Administration. Is not that a circumstance which ought to be taken into account when you are thinking of the future? Then, again, through a variety of causes, the raw material and all the necessaries of life are exorbitantly dear; and as regards those black labourers themselves, who, you say, come in insufficient numbers to the mines, I saw a very remarkable passage which was quoted to-day from the evidence given by Mr. Grant, who was Native Labour Commissioner to the Johannesburg Chamber of Mines, before this very Commission. What he said was this—

> "The action and blunders of the past year,"

that is, the year after the close of the war,

> "distinctly alienated the natives, and no proof whatever has been afforded that the number of men required cannot be made available providing that the conditions of service are satisfactory, not only to the employers, but to the employed."

I confess, after studying the evidence carefully, nothing appears to me more probable than that if you avoid hurried and precipitate action, if you allow the natural operation of the healing forces now at work, but above all if fair wages and good conditions are secured to the labourer, both white and black, the most serious features in the economic situation of the Transvaal will soon be removed.

I now come to the only remaining point. Suppose you are to resort to outside labour, I repeat the question which has been put several times, but which has never been answered—Why did not the Government go to India? The right hon. Gentleman interjected a remark in the course of the debate to the effect that Indians are not miners. What about the Mysore miners? As far as my information goes both in gold mines, coal mines, and, I think, in iron mines, you will find among the Indians a most serviceable and handy set of men. Then why did they not go to India? They did not go to India because they knew very well that if they did, and made any such proposition to the Government of that country as they have made to the Chinese Government, it would have been rejected without a moment's hesitation. The other night the Secretary for India, perhaps imagining that he was still at the War Office, likened the condition of the Chinaman under these regulations to that of the British soldier. But to-night the Prime Minister has gone one better; he has told us that the Chinaman under this indentured labour will only be in the same position as a sailor in our mercantile marine. We little knew how much slavery existed among our soldiers and sailors! But, coming away from India for a moment, I suppose most hon. Members read, I certainly read with very great interest, to-day a paper by Sir Frank Swettenham, who is one of our greatest authorities on this subject. What did he say? Speaking of his experience in the Malay Peninsula, the Straits Settlements, and the Federated Malay States, he told us he there had had a most favourable acquaintance with the Chinese. They came in with perfect freedom, they even entered into partnership, it appears, with those who originally employed them, and even exercised duties on councils and duties of a legislative nature. That is a system which works very well in the Malay Peninsula; but does anybody propose to set up such a system in any of our white communities? You cannot; I am not saying you could for a moment; it is an absolute impossibility. Therefore, all the evidence which is derived from an experience like that is entirely irrelevant to a case like that of the Transvaal. What would you have to do? You would have to take Chinamen, not such as voluntarily emigrate to such places as Singapore, but of an inferior class, subject them to the thousand and one restrictions contained in this Ordinance, and, above all, and this is at the root of the whole matter, prevent them coming into living contact with the community in and for which they work. That is the secret of all these special restrictions.

When the right hon. Gentleman tells us, as he did just now, that he is only following in our footsteps, that those who sit on this Bench, or previous Ministers, are responsible for the initiation of slavery, I tell him there is one vital and fundamental difference between every Ordinance that exists, I do not care where, throughout the length and breadth of the British Empire and the Ordinance now under consideration, and that difference is this—in all the existing Ordinances such restrictions as there are, they may be too numerous, or too severe, I do not know, but such restrictions as there are are devised and enforced entirely for the purpose of seeing that the labourer executes his contract with his employer. Yes, but what is the reason for the additional restrictions which are put into this Ordinance? It is not to secure the performance by the labourer of his contract that his employer prevents the labourer from getting into free contact or communication with the community; it is to keep him in a situation in which you have never ventured, and never will venture, to keep any subject of the King, however humble he may be or from whatever quarter of the Empire he may come —a situation from which he cannot aspire to rise, however frugal, industrious, thrifty, or public-spirited he may be, in which he can never aspire to be a living member of the community. I read in the paper this morning a very remarkable statement by the secretary of the Transvaal Mine-owners' Association in reply to a question whether he thought that the mines could be worked remuneratively by white labour. The reply was that they could not, as the inhaling of sharp particles of dust in the mines produced a deleterious effect on the lungs, which rendered the working life of the white miner not more than seven years. This had not the same effect on the Kaffir, whose lungs were of coarser texture, and who also differ from his white competitor in that they were able to recuperate from the effects of this dust by working only for six out of the twelve months. In other words, the Kaffir preserves his lungs by spending six months out of the twelve in his kraal. But what about the Chinaman? Is the nature of the employment which the Chinaman is to enter into to be explained to him at Hong-Kong? I do not know what exactly is the texture of the Chinaman's lungs, but I assume that Providence has been equally kind to him as to the Kaffir. But the Chinaman is to remain under service for three years, and he cannot leave the compound except with the permission of his employer.

AN HON. MEMBER: He will never be absent.

MR. ASQUITH: Yes, if the master chooses to refuse him permission he will never be absent at all. I will not quarrel with the Prime Minister about the use of the word slavery; I agree with my right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition that the important thing is the *status* which is created, and not the name by which it is described. The Prime Minister says that our talk about slavery is clap-trap. Let me quote a parallel case. What would have happened if this Ordinance had been passed in the *régime* of President Kruger and the Volksraad, at the instance, or with the consent of, the mine-owners, whose interest for some years was powerful in that quarter? What should we have all said about it? Some of us on both sides of the House were very severe critics of that *régime*. I remember a famous phrase in a despatch of Lord Milner's, which I always thought ought not to have been published, in which he spoke, shortly before war, of the unfranchised Uitlanders as helots. The best of us have our bad moments when we drop into rhetoric. But if the Uitlander could be likened to a helot, how would the same eloquent pen have described the imported Chinaman? Would he, would any of us, have shrunk from using the word "slave"? Is it not morally certain if this Ordinance had been passed by that body under these conditions that President Kruger's attention would have been drawn to the eighth Article of the Convention of 1884, viz.—

> "No slavery or apprenticeship partaking of slavery will be tolerated by the Government of the South African Republic?"

In view of that Article is it not conceivable, at any rate, that President Kruger would have been asked for explanations? You may call it what you will; it is not a question of names. But the fact remains, and the plain fact is this, that, without any clear mandate from the Transvaal itself, in defiance, as I believe, of the predominant sentiment both of this country and of the Empire at large, you are hurrying and rushing a situation which, if ever there was one, needed a quiet hand and a patient temper, you are by means of this Ordinance putting in jeopardy the whole future of South Africa.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 242; Noes, 299. (Division List No. 66.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, Charles P.
Ambrose, Robert
Asher, Alexander
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbt. Henry
Atherley-Jones, L.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Bayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.
Bell, Richard
Black, Alexander William
Blake, Edward
Boland, John
Bowles, T. Gibson (King's Lynn
Brigg, John
Broadhurst, Henry
Brown, George M. (Edinburgh)
Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
Bryce, Rt. Hon. James
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland
Burns, John
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Campbell, John (Armagh, S.)
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Causton, Richard Knight
Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)
Cawley, Frederick
Channing, Francis Allston
Churchill, Winston Spencer
Clancy, John Joseph
Cogan, Denis J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Craig, Robert Hunter (Lanark)
Cremer, William Randal
Crombie, John William
Crooks, William
Cullinan, J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Alfred (Carmarthen)
Davies, M. Vaughan (Cardigan
Delany, William
Devlin, Chas. Ramsay (Galway
Devlin, Joseph (Kilkenny, N.)
Dewar, John A. (Inverness-sh.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dobbie, Joseph
Donelan, Captain A.
Doogan, P. C.
Douglas, Charles M. (Lanark)
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, J. Hastings
Edwards, Frank
Elibank, Master of
Ellice, Capt E.C (S.Andrw'sBghs
Ellis, John Edward (Notts.)
Emmott, Alfred
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Evans, Sir F. H. (Maidstone)
Eve, Harry Trelawney
Farquharson, Dr Robert
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
Ffrench, Peter
Field, William
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmund
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Sir Mich. (Lond. Univ.
Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Freeman-Thomas, Captain F.
Fuller, J. M. F.
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gilhooly, James
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Grant, Corrie
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir E. (Berwick)
Griffith, Ellis J.
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Hammond, John
Harcourt, Lewis V. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Rt Hn Sir W (Monm'th
Harmsworth R. Leicester
Harwood, George
Hatch, Ernest Frederick Geo.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hayter, Rt. Hon. Sir Arthur D.
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemphill, Rt. Hon. Charles H.
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (Bristol, E.)
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Frederick John
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Hutton, Alfred E. (Morley)
Jacoby, James Alfred
Joicey, Sir James
Jones, D. Brynmor (Swansea)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jordan, Jeremiah
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kemp, Lieut.-Colonel George
Kilbride, Denis
Kitson, Sir James
Labouchere, Henry
Lambert, George
Langley, Batty
Law, Hugh Alex. (Donegal, W.)
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cornwall)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leamy, Edmund
Leigh, Sir Joseph
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, David
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
M'Crae, George
M'Fadden, Edward
M'Hugh, Patrick A.
M'Kean, John
M'Kenna, Reginald
M'Killop, W. (Sligo, North)
M'Laren, Sir Charles Benjamin
Mellor, Rt. Hon. John William
Mooney, John J.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morley, Charles (Breconshire)
Morley, Rt. Hn. John (Montrose
Moss, Samuel
Moulton, John Fletcher
Murphy, John
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Newnes, Sir George
Nolan, Col. J. P. (Galway, N.)
Nolan, Joseph (Louth, South)
Norman, Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, James F. X. (Cork)
O'Brien, K. (Tipperary, Mid.)
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Brien, P. J. (Tipperary, N.)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.
O'Donnell, John (Mayo, S.)
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, Jas. (Roscommon, N.)
O'Malley, William
O'Mara, James
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parrott, William
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearson, Sir Weetman D.
Pease, J. A. (Saffron Walden)
Perks, Robert William
Power, Patrick Joseph

Price, Robert John
Priestley, Arthur
Rea, Russell
Reckitt, Harold James
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rickett, J. Compton
Rigg, Richard
Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Edmund (Dundee)
Robson, William Snowdon
Roche, John
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Rose, Charles Day
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Schwann, Charles E.
Seely, Charles Hilton (Lincoln)
Seely, Maj.J.E.B.(Isleof Wight
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Thomas (Hawick, B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (Forfarshire)
Slack, John Bamford
Smith, Samuel (Flint)
Soames, Arthur Wellesly
Soares, Ernest J.
Spencer, Rt.Hn.C.R(Northants
Stevenson, Francis S.
Strachey, Sir Edward
Sullivan, Donal
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan,E.)
Thomas, D. Alfred (Merthyr)
Thomas,J.A(Glamorgan,Gower
Thomson, F. W. (York, W. R.)
Tillet, Louis John
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Wallace, Robert
Walton, Jn. Lawson (Leeds,S.)
Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
Warner, Thomas, Courtenay T.
Wason, Eugene (Clackmannan)
Wason, Jn. Cathcart (Orkney)
Weir, James Galloway
White, George (Norfolk)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whiteley, George (York, W.R.)
Whitley, J. H. (Halifax)
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid.)
Wilson, J.W.(Worcestersh., N.)
Wood, James
Woodhouse,Sir J.T(Huddersf'd
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Herbert Gladstone and Mr. William M'Arthur.

NOES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Aird, Sir John
Allsopp, Hon. George
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster,Rt.Hn.Hugh O
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. SirH
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bailey, James (Walworth)
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Baird, John George Alexander
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt.Hn. A.J.(Manch'r
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (Hornsey)
Balfour, Rt. Hon. G. W. (Leeds
Balfour, Kenneth R. (Christch.
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banes, Major George Edward
Barry, Sir Francis T. (Windsor)
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Bathurst, Hn. Allen Benjamin
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir Mich. Hicks
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bignold, Arthur
Bigwood, James
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Boulnois, Edmund
Bousfield, William Robert
Bowles, Lt.-Col.H.F(Middlesex
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Brown, Sir Alex. H. (Shropsh.)
Bull, William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, John George
Campbell, J.H.M.(Dublin Univ
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cautley, Henry Strother
Cavendish, V.C.W. (Derbyshire
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (Greenwich)
Chamberlain, Rt.Hn.J.A(Worc
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Chapman, Edward
Charrington, Spencer
Clare, Octavius Leigh
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Coates, Edward Feetham
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Cook, Sir Frederick Lucas
Cox, Irwin Edward Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim,S
Cripps, Charles Alfred
Cross, Alexander (Glasgow)
Cross, Herb. Shepherd (Bolton)
Crossley, Rt. Hon. Sir Savile
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Cust, Henry John C.
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Davenport, William Bromley
Davies, Sir H. D. (Chatham)
Dewar,Sir T.R.(Tower Hamlets
Dickinson, Robert Edmond
Dickson, Charles Scott
Digby, John K. D. Wingfield-
Dimsdale,Rt.Hn.Sir Joseph C.
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Dorington, Rt. Hn. Sir John E.
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir William Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt.Hn.Sir William Hart
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fergusson,Rt.Hn.Sir J(Manc'r
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Firbank, Sir Joseph Thomas
Fisher, William Hayes
Fison, Frederick William
FitzGerald, Sir Robert Penrose
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Flower, Sir Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Fyler, John Arthur
Galloway, William Johnson
Gardner, Ernest
Garfit, William
Gibbs, Hon. A. G. H.
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Gordon, Hn.J.E.(Elgin&Nairn)
Gordon, J. (Londonderry, S.)
Gore, Hn. S. F. Ormsby (Linc.)
Goschen, Hon. George Joachim
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Graham, Henry Robert
Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
Greene, Henry D.(Shrewsbury)
Greene, W. Raymond (Cambss.
Grenfell, William Henry
Gretton, John
Greville, Hon. Ronald
Groves, James Grimble
Guthrie, Walter Murray
Halsey, Rt. Hon. Thomas F.
Hambro, Charles Eric
Hamilton,Marq of(L'nd'nderry
Hardy, L. (Kent, Ashford)
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harris, F. Leverton (Tynem'th
Harris, Dr. Fredk. R. (Dulwich
Haslam, Sir Alfred S.

Haslett, Sir James Horner
Heath, Arthur Howard(Hanley
Heath, James (Staffords., N.W.
Heaton, John Henniker
Helder, Augustus
Henderson, Sir A. (StaffordsW.
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hickman, Sir Alfred
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hobhouse, RtHn.H(Somers'tE
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J.F(Sheffield,Brightside
Hornby, Sir William Henry
Horner, Frederick William
Hoult, Joseph
Houston, Robert Paterson
Howard, J. (Kent, Faversham)
Hozier, Hn. James Henry Cecil
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Hunt, Rowland
Hutton, John (Yorks., N. R.)
Jameson, Major J. Eustace
Jebb, Sir Richard Claverhouse
Jeffreys, Rt. Hon. Arthur Fred.
Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
Kennaway, Rt. Hn.Sir JohnH.
Kenyon, Hn. Geo. T. (Denbigh)
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W.(Salop.
Keswick, William
Kimber, Henry
Knowles, Sir Lees
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Law, Andrew Bonar (Glasgow)
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (Monmouth)
Lawrence, Wm. F. (Liverpool)
Lawson, J. Grant (Yorks.,N.R.
Lee, A. H. (Hants., Fareham)
Lees, Sir Elliott (Birkenhead)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Frederick N.S.
Llewellyn, Evan Henry
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long, Col.Charles W.(Evesham
Long, Rt. Hon. W. (Bristol, S.)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Francis William
Lucas, Col. Francis (Lowestoft)
Lucas, Reginald J.(Portsmouth
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
Macdona, John Cumming
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Calmont, Colonel James
M'Killop, James (Stirlingshire)
Majendie, James A. H.
Malcolm, Ian
Manners, Lord Cecil
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Massey-Mainwaring, Hn. W.F.
Maxwell,RtHn.Sir H.E(Wigt'n
Maxwell, W.J.H. (Dumfriessh.
Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
Middlemore, Jn. Throgmorton
Milner, Rt.Hn.Sir Frederick G.
Milvain, Thomas
Mitchell, William (Burnley)
Molesworth, Sir Lewis
Montagu, G. (Huntingdon)
Montagu, Hn. J. Scott (Hants.)
Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
Moore, William
Morgan, D. J. (Walthamstow)
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Mowbray, Sir Robert Gray C.
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Murray, Rt. Hon. A. G. (Bute)
Murray, Charles J. (Coventry)
Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
Myers, William Henry
Newdegate, Francis A. N.
Nicholson, William Graham
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Palmer, Walter (Salisbury)
Parker, Sir Gilbert
Parkes, Ebenezer
Peel, Hn.Wm.Robert Wellesley
Percy, Earl
Pierpoint, Robert
Pilkington, Colonel Richard
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Plummer, Walter R.
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Pym, C. Guy
Rankin, Sir James
Rasch, Sir Frederic Carne
Ratcliff, R. F.
Reid, James (Greenock)
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renwick, George
Ridley, Hn. M.W.(Stalybridge)
Ridley, S.Forde(Bethnal Green
Ritchie, Rt.Hn.Chas. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (Sheffield)
Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
Robinson, Brooke
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.
Rothschild, Hn. Lionel Walter
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Samuel, Sir H. S. (Limehouse)
Sandys, Lt.-Col. Thos. Myles
Saunderson, Rt.Hn.Col. Edw.J
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Seton-Karr, Sir Henry
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Sinclair, Louis (Romford)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Smith, Abel H.(Hertford,East)
Smith, HC(North'mb.Tyneside
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Spear, John Ward
Stanley, Hn. Arthur (Ormskirk
Stanley, Edward Jas. (Somerset
Stanley, Rt. Hon. Lord (Lancs.
Stewart, Sir Mark J. M'Taggart
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.
Stock, James Henry
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt.Hn.J.G.(Oxf'd Univ
Thorburn, Sir Walter
Thornton, Percy M.
Tollemache, Henry James
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw. M.
Tuff, Charles
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Vincent, Col. Sir C.E.H(Sheff'ld
Vincent, Sir Edgar (Exeter)
Walker, Col. William Hall
Walrond, Rt.Hn.Sir William H
Wanklyn, James Leslie
Warde, Colonel C. E.
Webb, Colonel William George
Welby, Lt.-Col. A.C.E(Taunton
Welby, Sir Charles G. E.(Notts.
Wharton, Rt. Hon. John Lloyd
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)
Willox, Sir John Archibald
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.
Wilson, John (Glasgow)
Wilson-Todd, Sir W.H.(Yorks.)
Wodehouse, Rt.Hn. E.R.(Bath
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland - Hood and Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes.

IMPERIAL REVENUE (COLLECTION AND EXPENDITURE) (GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND).

Return ordered, "relating to Imperial Revenue (Collection and Expenditure) (Great Britain and Ireland) for the year ending the 31st day of March, 1904 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 256, of session 1903)."—(*Mr. J. A. Pease.*)

Adjourned at half after Twelve o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 22nd March, 1904.

MARQUESS OF SLIGO.

Ordered, That the Report of the Lord Chancellor of the United Kingdom, made to the House of Lords on Friday last, that the right of the Marquess of Sligo to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland has been established to his satisfaction, be sent to the Clerk of the Crown in Ireland, together with a certificate stating that such Report has been made, and that the House has ordered it to be sent to the said Clerk of the Crown in Ireland.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—Corbridge Gas; Great Eastern Railway (Steamboats). The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Marylebone Chapels (Saint James, Westmoreland Street) Bill [H.L.]. Committed.

Tyneside Tramways and Tramroads Bill [H.L.]. Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Site for Duke of York's School Bill [H.L.]. Reported, with Amendments, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

New River Company Bill [H.L.]; York Town and Blackwater Gas Bill [H.L.]; Southend Water Bill; Barnard Castle Gas Bill [H.L.]; Elysée Palace Hotel Company Bill [H.L.]; West Metropolitan Railway (Abandonment) Bill [H.L.]; Victoria University of Yorkshire Bill [H.L.]; Nuneaton and Chilvers Coton Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]; Ticehurst and District Water and Gas Bill [H.L.]; Huddersfield Corporation Act, 1902 (Amendment) Bill [H.L.]; Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company Bill [H.L.]. Reported, with Amendments.

Gosport Water Bill [H.L.]. Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments

Whitby Gas Bill; Hampton-in-Arden Gas Bill. Read 2^a, and committed.

Tynemouth Gas Bill [H.L.]. Read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Preston, Chorley, and Horwich Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Read 3 , Amendments made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

Metropolitan Common Scheme (Hillingdon East) Provisional Order Bill. Brought from the Commons; read 1^a; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 35.)

Littlestone-on-Sea and District Water Bill; South Shields Gas Bill. Brought from the Commons; read 1^a; and referred to the Examiners.

Bridlington Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Bristol Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Ebbw Vale Urban District Water Bill [H.L.]; Harrogate Waterworks Tramroad Bill [H.L.]; Leeds Corporation (Waterworks) Railway Bill [H.L.]; Llanelly Harbour Bill [H.L.]; Belfast Corporation (Tramways) Bill [H.L.]; Holywood Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Metropolitan District Railway Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; (viz.)—

E. Craven,
E. Camperdown (*chairman*),
L. Boston,
L. Shute (*V. Barrington*),
L. Biddulph;

agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly. The Committee to meet on Thursday the 21st of April next at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills.

Ulster Electric Power Bill [H.L.]; Lancashire Electric Power Bill [H.L.]; Lothians Electric Power Bill [H.L.]; Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Electric Power Bill [H.L.]; Belfast and North-East Ireland Electricity and Power Gas Bill [H.L.]; Clyde Valley Electrical

Power Bill [H.L.]; Buxton Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]; Derwent Valley Water Board Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; (viz.)—

E. Lauderdale (*chairman*),	L. Monteagle of Brandon,
E. Beauchamp,	L. Estcourt;
L. Saltoun,	

agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly. The Committee to meet on Thursday the 21st of April next at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COMMERCIAL, No. 3 (1904).

Reports on the constitution and functions of Ministries of Commerce or analagous branches of Foreign Administrations (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, Commercial, No. 12 (1889) [Cd. 5674]. Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

NAVAL PRIZE BILL [H.L.].

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (The Earl of HALSBURY): My Lords, two years ago this Bill was passed through all its stages in your Lordships' House, but since then nothing has been heard of it, and I conclude that it must have dropped out at the end of the session without being noticed. The measure is agreed to on both sides of the House. I desire now to make a further attempt to get it passed into law. The Bill is in a great measure a Consolidation Bill. The Admiralty are desirous of putting a new naval guide at the disposal of officers in the Navy and this Bill relates to a region in which it is desirable that the law should be consolidated.

Moved, That the Bill be now read 2^{a}.—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

LORD ALVERSTONE: My Lords, I was unaware until I came down to the House to-day that this Bill was on the Paper, but I should like to say a few words in its support. I consider it to be extremely important that this Bill should be passed. At the outbreak of the South African War, when I was Attorney-General, it was found that virtually the rules and practice of the various prize Courts had not been considered for twenty-five or thirty years from the point of view of putting them on an organised basis. I know by personal knowledge, from communications made to me during the last two or three years by those who have been concerned in the drafting of the Bill, which was commenced during the time I was Attorney General, that there is the greatest need for the measure, and I trust your Lordships will pass it and that it will become law this session.

On Question, Bill read 2^{a}, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

THE VOLUNTEERS—ALLOWANCES.

***THE EARL OF STRADBROKE**: My Lords, I rise to ask the Under-Secretary of State for War if he can hold out any hopes that the allowance of 2s. 6d. per day for Volunteers attending regimental camps will be increased or if separation allowances will be granted to married Volunteers attending these camps. Your Lordships are aware of the difficulties that officers in Volunteer Corps have experienced in taking the requisite number of men into camp, and I venture to think that, if the allowance was increased or a separation allowance granted to married Volunteers attending the regimental camps, Commanding Officers would be relieved of a considerable amount of anxiety, and the force generally would be rendered more efficient by better attendance in camp. Not only are the men called upon to give up a considerable amount of their leisure time to attend drills and parades in the afternoon and evening, but they are also called upon to attend camp on six consecutive days, at least every alternate year. This means a considerable sacrifice of time to the Volunteers, and it must be borne in mind that during the period they are in camp they do not earn any wages. It is therefore a considerable pecuniary sacrifice that they are called upon to make. In some cases, however, employers are so patriotic that they not only offer every opportunity they can to men to attend camp, but pay their wages during the time they are in camp. I am aware that the Army Estimates have been presented, and that the noble Earl, the Under-Secretary of State for War, may say he is unable to undertake anything that would entail any great increase in expenditure; but I trust that even if the first part of my Question meets with a negative reply the second part may be more fortunate. We are aware that a Royal Commission is sitting at the present moment on the question of the Auxiliary Forces, and that it will presumably report during this session; but, whatever their Report may be, I conclude that Volunteer camps will be held this year as usual, and that it will be necessary for at least 50 per cent. of the Volunteers to attend. I have referred to the sacrifices that the Volunteers are called upon to make, but the loss of money presses most heavily on the married Volunteers; and therefore I think it would be well if the War Office could see their way to grant them separation allowances. The cost to the country would not be very large, and it would enable many men who at present do not feel able to attend the camps to do so. This is the time when camps are being arranged for, and if the noble Earl could see his way to give a favourable answer to my Question I am sure a good many men who are now hesitating as to whether or not they can attend camp, will decide to do so. On this ground, and with the view of encouraging the greatest possible number of Volunteers to attend the camps during this summer, I would urge the noble Earl to give a favourable answer at least to the second part of my Question.

*THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (The Earl of DONOUGHMORE): My Lords, I can assure the noble Earl that my colleagues on the Army Council fully share the anxiety of all commanding officers to get their men to attend camp. We recognise that there are great difficulties in the way, and we fully appreciate the efforts that are made by commanding officers to carry out the regulations. The noble Earl has suggested two alternatives which I have no doubt would be of great use in this direction. With regard to the first, he has pointed out that the Army Estimates have been introduced and that there is no provision in them for raising the camp allowance; and I would remind the noble Earl that the same difficulty applies to the second alternative with regard to the granting of separation allowances, for it would equally involve a very considerable charge on the Estimates. The fact that the Army Estimates have already been introduced in another place constitutes a difficulty in the way of the immediate adoption of either of the alternatives proposed. It is not, however, on this technical objection that I mainly rely in refusing the noble Earl's request. As he has pointed out, a Royal Commission is now considering the whole question of the Volunteers, and pending their Report it would scarcely be advisable for the War Office to carry out either of these alternatives, which would involve a great departure from the established practice.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN (AMENDMENT) BILL [H.L.].

Read 3^a (according to order); Amendments (Privilege) made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Five o'clock, to Thursday next, half-past Ten o'clock,

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HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 22nd March, 1904.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Felixstowe Gas Bill; Gomersal Gas Bill; Kettering Improvement Bill; Norwich Water Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Bexhill Water and Gas Bill; North Staffordshire Railway Bill; Sutton Gas

Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Middlesborough, Stockton-on-Tees, and Thornaby Tramways Bill. Read a second time, and committed.

Metropolitan Common Scheme (Farnborough) Provisional Order Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill. Read a second time, and committed.

Charing Cross, Euston, and Hampstead Railway Bill. Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table and to be printed.

STANDING ORDERS.

Resolutions reported from the Select Committee:—

1. "That, in the case of the London County Council (General Powers) Bill, Petition for additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:—That the parties be permitted to introduce their additional Provision if the Committee on the Bill think fit."

2. "That, in the case of the Bristol Tramways (Extensions) Bill [Lords], the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill, provided that the powers to construct Tramways Nos. 7 and 9 be struck out of the Bill; that the powers to construct Tramways Nos. 3 and 5 be struck out of the Bill, unless the consent of the Warmley Rural District Council be proved before the Committee on the Bill; that the powers to construct Tramway No. 4 be struck out of the Bill, unless proof be given before the Examiner that the consents of the local and road authorities have been obtained, and that the Standing Orders applicable to that tramway in other respects have been complied with:—That the Committee on the Bill do report how far such Order has been complied with."

Resolutions agreed to.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to enable the Ipswich Dock Commissioners to construct certain works in connection with their docks; to make a tramway and tramroad; to raise additional money; and for other purposes." [Ipswich Dock Commission Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for incorporating and conferring powers on the Harlow and Sawbridgeworth Gas Company; and for other purposes." [Harlow and Sawbridgeworth Gas Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the powers of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board with respect to the levying of rates." [Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to extend the time for the completion of certain railways by the Barry Railway Company; and for other purposes." [Barry Railway (Extension of Time, etc.) Bill [Lords.]

Ipswich Dock Commission Bill [Lords]; Harlow and Sawbridgeworth Gas Bill [Lords]; Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Bill [Lords]; Barry Railway (Extension of Time, etc.) Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

LICENCE HOLDERS.

Petition from Southampton, for redress of grievances; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCES (RENEWAL).

Petitions against alteration of Law; from Fulbourne; Enfield Highway; Salford; Chelsea; London (two); Chorley; Standish; Astley Bridge; Dundee; Winchester; Sunderland; Bolton (four); Burnley; Leicester; Stockport; Bredbury; Cwmtwrch; Taunton; Shrewsbury; Farnworth (two); Bo'ness; Gwersyllt and Rhosrobin; Coedpoeth (two); Rhosymedre; Johnston; Ruabon; Bryn Eglwys; Horsham; Rhos; Holyhead (two); Cemaes; Carnforth; Adwy's Clawd; Gareglefn; Peterhead (two); Lewes; Liverpool; Todmorden; Redruth; Hebden Bridge; Crawley; Llangristiolus; Failsworth; Tulse Hill; Burnbank Hamilton; and Cardiff; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF BUTTER BILL.

Petitions against; from Wellingborough (two); and Bolton; to lie upon the Table.

TRANSVAAL (CHINESE LABOUR ORDINANCE).

Petitions for withdrawal; from Farnworth (two); and Scarborough; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

FOREIGN MINISTRIES OF COMMERCE (COMMERCIAL, No. 3, 1904).

Copy presented, of Reports on the Constitution and Functions of Ministries of Commerce or Analogous Branches of Foreign Administrations [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 3128 to 3130 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PAUPERISM (ENGLAND AND WALES) (MONTHLY STATEMENTS).

Copy ordered, "of Statements for each month of the year 1904 of the number of Paupers relieved in England and Wales (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 41, of Session 1903)." —(*Mr. Grant Lawson.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 108.]

LABOURERS' COTTAGES (IRELAND).

Return ordered, "in respect of Labourers' Cottages in Ireland, showing: (1) County; (2) Rural District; (3) Valuation of Rural District; (4) Number of Labourers' Cottages (a) built, (b) in course of construction; (5) Amount of Loans (a) sanctioned, (b) received; (6) Amount required to be raised annually in repayment of Loans sanctioned; (7) Amount which would be raised by the maximum rate of one shilling in the pound allowed for purposes of Acts; (8) Rate per pound required to raise amount specified in Column 6; (9) Present poundage rate levied on Rural District for Labourers' Acts purposes; (10) Amount of Exchequer Contribution for the year ended the 31st day of March, 1904; (11) Amount of rent received from tenants of cottages and plots during year; (12) Unissued balance, if any, of County's share of Exchequer Contribution; (13) Totals per County and Province, and for all Ireland; (14) The Return to be made up to the 31st day of March, 1904 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 198, of Session 1903)."—(*Mr. O'Shaughnessy.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Sinking of Kish Bank Lightship.

MR. CHARLES McARTHUR (Liverpool, Exchange): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will state the day and hour on which the Kish Bank lightship was sunk; the day and hour on which a relief vessel was placed on the station; the cause of the delay, if any, in so doing; and the reason why the Board of Trade have not held an inquiry into the circumstances of the sinking of the ship.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) I am informed by the Commissioners of Irish Lights that the lightship on the Kish Bank was sunk on the 8th September, 1902, at 5 p.m., and was replaced by another in the afternoon of the following day, the light being exhibited that night. There was no avoidable delay. It is not usual to institute a formal investigation under the Merchant Shipping Act in a case likely to be heard in the Admiralty Court, and the Board of Trade were not prepared to incur the expense of detaining witnesses for inquiry until the end of the protracted negotiations, which resulted in an admission of liability on the part of the owners of the vessel which ran into the lightship.

Loss of Fittings for the Fastnet Lighthouse.

MR. CHARLES McARTHUR: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the fact that on or about the 21st October, 1903, a large quantity of fittings for the construction of the lighting gear of the Fastnet lighthouse was washed off the rock, he will state the condition of the weather at the time the gear was landed from the "Ierne"; whether he is aware that immediately it was landed the "Ierne" left the rock, before the gear had been put into a safe position; and will he state who is responsible for the loss, what was the value of the fittings lost, and how long will the establishment of the new light be delayed in consequence.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) I am informed by the Commissioners of Irish Lights that the weather was fine and the sea smooth when the gear was landed; that the "Ierne" immediately returned to Crook Haven, the placing of the gear into a safe position being carried out by the workmen on the rock; that the loss was entirely due to the very sudden and unexpected change in the weather; that the cost of replacing the fittings will be about £200; and that it is hoped that, given fine weather, the new light will be exhibited during the ensuing summer.

Irish Lights Steamer "Princess Alexandra."

MR. CHARLES McARTHUR: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Irish Lights steamer "Princess Alexandra" has been condemned; and, if so, what is to be done with her; whether her crew is retained on pay; and if so, what duties are they performing; and what are the number and ratings of those on leave.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) I am informed by the Commissioners of Irish Lights that the "Princess Alexandra" has been condemned and publicly offered for sale; that her crew continue to receive their regular wages and allowances; that, with the exception of the second officer, who has been granted a month's leave, they are all engaged on active duties, the commander and many of the crew being on board the s.s. "Ierne" which is delivering stores off the north coast of Ireland, while the remainder, with the exception of the second engineer (who is watching the construction and placing of the twin screw engines in the new vessel), are taking down and packing up certain fittings and stores which are to be transferred from the "Princess Alexandra" to the new vessel, after which their services will be utilised as far as possible on board the s.s. "Tearaght" during her coast work, in place of shipping temporary hands.

Prices of Coal and Oil Purchased by Trinity House.

MR. CHARLES McARTHUR: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will state the contract prices for coal and oil purchased by Trinity House and delivered at their store depôts during the last year dealt with in the accounts.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) I am indebted to the courtesy of the Trinity House for the information enabling me to give replies to this and my hon. friend's two other Questions affecting them. At the nine depôts where coal was delivered the average prices for the year ended 30th June, 1903, were: for house coals 20s. 0½d. per ton, for steam coals 20s. 7d. per ton. As regards oil the contract prices for the year ended 31st March, 1903, were: for heavy mineral oil (average of three depôts) 6¼d. per gallon, for paraffin oil 5¾d. per gallon.

Cost of Maintenance of Sirens at the Nash and Penlee Point.

MR. CHARLES McARTHUR: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will state the annual cost of maintaining the fog siren at the Nash and the reed horn signal at Penlee Point respectively, exclusive of wages.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) I am informed that the Nash fog signal was only established in December last, and the annual cost of maintenance must of course depend on the number of hours of fog experienced. This cost is estimated at about £86. The annual expenditure on the Penlee Point fog signal for the twelve months ended 30th September last was £108.

Cost of Maintenance of Dowsing and Breaksea Lightships and St. Catherine's and Pendeen Lights.

MR. CHARLES McARTHUR: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will state the annual cost of maintenance of the Outer Dowsing, Inner

Dowsing, and Breaksea lightships, also of St. Catherine's (electric) and Pendeen (oil) lights and sirens respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) I am informed that the average cost of maintenance at the—

		£
Outer Dowsing (with a siren fog signal) is . . .		1,431
Inner Dowsing (with a hand horn only) is . . .		1,243
Breaksea (with a reed horn fog signal) is . . .		1,363
St. Catherine's, electric light	£1,075	
,, fog signal	112	
	———	1,187
Pendeen, oil light . .	£504	
,, fog signal .	87	
	———	591

In the case of the three first named the average is based on seven years' expenditure, in the other two on three years' expenditure, and the figures in these two cases include the wages for the whole station and the cost of upkeep of the buildings.

Sale of Adulterated Whisky.

Mr. J. E. GORDON (Elgin and Nairn): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Government propose to take action as regards the sale of whisky, now described as Scotch, malt, and Highland whisky, but which is the product either of German spirit, or of maize, rice, and molasses.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) If a complaint that a breach of the Merchandise Marks Act has been committed in a specific case is submitted to me in accordance with the regulations made under Section 2 of the Merchandise Marks Act, 1891, I will give it my careful consideration.

Royal College of Science—Scholars in Receipt of Aid from Local Education Authorities.

Mr. ERNEST GRAY (West Ham, N.): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether he can state what is the percentage of National scholars now in attendance at the Royal College of Science who are in receipt of extra aid in the form of scholarships or grants from local education authorities.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) Since 1902 only one case has arisen in which a National scholar in the Royal College of Science has requested the Board's permission to hold his National scholarship conjointly with a scholarship or grant from a local education authority. In this case permission was given by the Board.

Postal Service between London and Paris.

Mr. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): To ask the Postmaster-General if he can state the number of deliveries daily of letters in London from Paris and *vice versâ*, with the hours of such deliveries in both towns.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) Letters received in the daily mails from Paris fall into four different deliveries in the City district of London, namely, those commencing at 7.20 a.m., 8.30 a.m., 6.20 p.m., and 8.30 p.m., and in the other London districts into three deliveries, which may be said to commence at 7 a.m., 10.15 a.m., and 5.40 p.m. It is understood that in Paris letters from London are distributed by three deliveries, commencing at 7.10 a.m., 5.45 p.m., and 7.40 p.m.

Supply of Regulation Waistcoats for Belfast Post Office Adult Messengers.

Mr. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General if he will explain why the adult messengers in Belfast and other towns are not supplied with the regulation waistcoats similar to postmen; and whether, in view of the night duty performed by these messengers, he will consider the advisability of extending the supply to them.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) I have looked into this matter, and I have decided to make the supply of uniforms to adult night messengers the same as that for winter wear to postmen and on the same conditions.

Halfpenny Post—Extension of Privileges.

Sir ALFRED HICKMAN (Wolverhampton, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he will extend the privilege of halfpenny postage at present applicable to orders for, and invoices of, goods, to requests for quotations sent in open envelopes on printed forms with only the necessary details written.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) I am sorry that I do not see my way to admitting to the privilege of the halfpenny post the documents to which the hon. Member refers. The question of extending the halfpenny post to include quotation forms and similar documents was very carefully considered before the recent revision of the regulations was sanctioned, and I am not prepared now to reconsider the decision against their inclusion.

Customs Service—Compensation for Retardation of Promotion.

Mr. ERNEST GRAY: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can state the date at which the retardation of those examining officers of Customs commenced who received compensation under General Order 15, 1904; whether any officers suffered retardation at or about the same time who have not yet been compensated; whether he can also state the number of officers of over twenty years service who have not yet received compensation; and can he state when their claims will be recognised under the terms of General Order 78, 1902, and the Board Minute of the 3rd December, 1902.

(*Answered by Mr. Victor Cavendish.*) The Board of Customs consider that the retardation of the examining officers commenced with the introduction of the new warehousing system in 1882, and accordingly 280 officers who had completed twenty years service by 1st September, 1902, were compensated, and, subsequently by General Order 15, 1904, forty-four others who completed a like service on 31st December, 1902. There remain some seventy-three officers of over twenty years service who have not yet received compensation, and their case is receiving the careful consideration of the Board.

Excise Revenue, Estate Duty, and Income Tax in the Dublin Collection.

Mr. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will state what was the amount of Excise Revenue, of Estate Duty, and of Income-Tax paid in the Dublin collection in the year ended 31st December, 1903.

(*Answered by Mr. Victor Cavendish.*) The figures for the calendar year cannot be given, but during the financial year ended 31st March, 1903, the amounts were as follows: Excise Revenue, £1,879,905; Estate, etc., Duties, £475,172; Income-Tax, £448,351.

Quarantine for Imported Dogs.

Mr. H. D. GREENE (Shrewsbury): To ask the hon. Member for North Huntingdonshire, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board of Agriculture will reduce the six months' quarantine of dogs from abroad to three months and, if so, when such order will take effect; and whether he can state how many dogs were quarantined in 1903; and whether the Board has any reason to believe that any of them have since shown signs of rabies.

(*Answered by Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes.*) It is already the practice of the Board to release an imported dog after three months quarantine in cases where the dog has been under the direct personal control of its owner during the three months preceding its importation. It would be dangerous to extend this relaxation to cases where such supervision was wanting. 367 dogs were landed from abroad in 1903 and detained under quarantine. In none of these have any signs of rabies been detected.

Sinking of a Submarine—Grants to Widows.

Mr. REGINALD LUCAS (Portsmouth): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he will state what grants will be made to the widows of the men who perished in the recent naval disaster at Portsmouth, and in what proportions the moneys so allotted will be derived from the Greenwich Hospital Fund and Imperial funds respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Pretyman.*) The pensions awarded will be in accordance with the following scale :—

Rating.	Widow's Pension per week.			Allowance for each child dependent on the mother, per week.
	From the Funds of Greenwich Hospital.	Supplementary Pension from Naval Funds.	Total.	
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
(1) Able seamen and stokers	3 6	1 6	5 0	1 6
(2) Second class petty officers	4 0	2 0	6 0	1 6
(3) First class petty officers	4 6	3 0	7 6	2 0
(4) Chief petty officers	5 0	4 0	9 0	2 0

Tibet Mission—Expenditure in Great Britain.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether there has been any expenditure in Great Britain on military or other stores or material for use in, or on account of, the expedition in Tibet beyond the external frontiers of His Majesty's Indian Possessions since the commencement of Colonel Younghusband's advance through Sikkim; and whether copies of accounts, with vouchers for such expenditure approved or disapproved by the auditor appointed under Section 52 of the Government of India Act, 1858, will be laid before Parliament at an early date.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) There has been no expenditure in this country on account of stores for the use of the Tibet Mission. Should any specific payments on account of the Mission be made in England they will be included in the Home Accounts, which will be presented to Parliament in the ordinary course, together with the auditor's report, in accordance with Section 52 and 53 of the Government of India Act of 1858.

Grievances of the Royal Irish Constabulary.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if it is intended to introduce legislation this session to carry out the recommendations of the Commission which sat to inquire into the grievances of the Royal Irish Constabulary as to pay and pension.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) I cannot at present give an undertaking such as suggested.

Expenditure under Military Works and Barracks Acts.

MR. TOMKINSON (Cheshire, Crewe): To ask the Secretary of State for War what is the estimated expenditure out of loans under all Military Works Acts and Barracks Acts in the years 1903–4 and 1904–5 respectively; and what are the sums charged upon Army Votes in those two years for interest on those loans and for reduction of capital respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster.*) The expenditure under the Military Works Acts during 1903–4 is estimated approximately at £3,600,000. It is not possible at the present time to give the figures for 1904–5, but it is not anticipated that in any event the expenditure will be less than that during the current year. Expenditure under the Barracks

Act of 1890 has already ceased. The sums to be charged against Army Votes in these two years in respect of Works Loans are—

		For Interest.	For reduction of Capital.	Total amount of Annuity.
		£	£	£
1903–4	Under Barracks Act . . .	62,562	241,405	303,967
	Under Military Works Acts .	151,856	97,041	248,897
	Total . . .	214,418	338,446	552,864

		For Interest.	For reduction of Capital.	Total amount of Annuity.
		£	£	£
1904–5	Under Barracks Act . . .	55,517	248,450	303,967
	Under Military Works Acts .	193,781	153,776	347,557
	Total . . .	249,298	402,226	651,524

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Wages of Indentured Chinese Labourers in the Transvaal.

MR. ERNEST GRAY (West Ham, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will require that the rate of wages which shall be paid to indentured Chinese labourers in the Transvaal shall not be less than the normal wage paid to Kaffir labourers engaged in occupations similar to those about to be undertaken by Chinese labourers.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. LYTTELTON, Warwick and Leamington): I do not consider it necessary or desirable to specify a minimum wage, but I have no fear that the standard of wages of the Chinese will be lower than that of Kaffir labourers.

Income-Tax Deductions.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, having regard to the fact that the London and Westminster Bank, Limited, as Agents for the Cape Government, deducted 1s. 3d. in the pound from dividends paid 15th April, 1903, and that this is 4d. in the pound in excess of the amount due for income-tax on that date, will he state how much of the money thus overpaid has since been refunded by the Inland Revenue to stockholders.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.): As the hon. Member has already been informed,† repayment has been granted in every case in which application (supported by the necessary evidence) has been made. I am informed that to compute the amount thus refunded would involve a great deal of labour and it would not, I think, serve any useful purpose.

MR. WEIR: Am I to understand that this information cannot be obtained in a few minutes?

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: Yes; the hon. Member is to understand it cannot be obtained with the ease he thinks.

Metropolitan Extension Railway.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, having regard to the fact that the atmosphere in the Metropolitan Extension Railway between

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxxi., 1135.

8 p.m. and midnight is specially foul through being surcharged with smoke emanating from coal of a highly bituminous character, will he represent to the railway company the desirability of using coal of a smokeless nature.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Gerald Balfour, Leeds, Central): I have communicated with the railway company on the subject of the hon. Member's Question, and, in reply, they inform me that on the extension line from Baker Street, as well as on the Inner Circle Railway the best hard Welsh smokeless coal is always used, and that inspectors are employed to see that the engine-drivers fire in a proper manner. It is added that the railway from Baker Street through the tunnels is to be worked by electricity at an early date.

Mr. WEIR said if the right hon. Gentleman would travel by a train near midnight from Baker Street to Finchley Road he would see that the facts were not stated in the information given to him.

Aylesbury Convict Prison.

Mr. DISRAELI (Cheshire, Altrincham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the extent of the damage done by the recent fire at His Majesty's Female Convict Prison at Aylesbury; what portion of the prison was destroyed; what will be the cost of rebuilding; and whether the work of restoration has been commenced.

*The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Akers Douglas, Kent, St. Augustine's): The fire destroyed the interior of the building, which contained the administrative offices, the chapel, the officers' infirmary and the stores; it also destroyed the roof—but only the roof—of the central hall of the prison, from which the wings containing the cells radiate. The reinstatement is estimated to cost about £5,000. The reconstruction of the roof of the central hall is, as a matter of urgency, being taken in hand at once, and plans are being prepared for the remainder of the work.

Royal College of Science—Local Authorities Scholarships.

Mr. ERNEST GRAY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether he can indicate what scholarships or exhibitions are now being awarded by local authorities which, having regard to the present regulations of the College, may be held by a student at the Royal College of Science concurrently with a National scholarship; and whether, having regard to the reduced value of the National scholarship, the Board of Education will discontinue its objection to a National scholar receiving aid from other public sources.

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the BOARD of EDUCATION (Sir William Anson, Oxford University): I am afraid that the Board have not in their possession sufficient information as to the terms of tenure of the scholarships and exhibitions now being awarded by local education authorities to enable me to reply to the first part of the Question. Under the existing regulations the Board have never yet objected to a National scholar in the Royal College of Science receiving aid from other public sources.

Island of Lewis—Social Condition.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, in view of the suggestions of the local committee relative to the recommendations contained in the Report on the social condition of the Island of Lewis, will he say whether he has yet decided on the course of action which he proposes to take so soon as the Congested Districts Amendment Bill has passed; and will he state whether the Second Reading of the Bill will be taken before Easter.

*The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Mr. A. Graham Murray, Buteshire): I cannot formulate in advance any course of action on the assumption that the Bill referred to by the hon. Member will pass into law. I am afraid the state of business is such as to make it improbable that the Second Reading can be taken before Easter.

Uncertified Deaths in Scotland.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, having regard to the fact that the last Report of the Registrar General for Scotland shows that 80,107 deaths were registered in Scotland during 1901, will he state how many of these deaths were uncertified; and when he proposes to introduce legislation on the subject.

*MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: The number of deaths uncertified in Scotland during the year 1901 was 2,392. I am not in a position to give any pledge as to legislation on this subject.

Public Buildings—Coal and Firewood Contracts.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the hon. Member for Chorley, as representing the First Commissioner of Works, having regard to the fact that a sum of £51,400 for coal and firewood for public buildings in Great Britain, under Class 1, Vote 9, Sub-head E, represents an increase of £1,650 on the previous year, will he explain the cause of the excess, and state when the coal contract was signed, and for what term.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): The increase was to provide against anticipated rises in the prices of Welsh steam coal and coke, and also to meet augmented consumption due to the expansion of the public Departments. There is no general contract for the supply of fuel. Over 200 contracts are involved. There are separate contracts for the various descriptions of fuel required in the various parts of the country in which the public buildings are situated. The contracts are generally for one year and run from various dates, but are nearly all made in the summer.

Licence Duties—Ireland's Equivalent Grant.

MR. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will state what was the net amount paid over to county and borough councils in England and Scotland respectively, in respect of licences for male servants, carriages, armorial bearings, and dogs in the year ended 31st December, 1903; what percentage is deducted by the Inland Revenue for collecting and allocating these licence duties before handing over the proceeds to county and borough councils; and what was the annual amount fixed to be paid to Ireland as an equivalent grant at the time these licence duties were diverted from the Imperial Exchequer to the local taxation account for England and Scotland on the passing of the English Local Government Act.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY (Mr. VICTOR CAVENDISH, Derbyshire, W.): The first part of the Question refers to the Local Government Board and the Scottish Office. The amounts paid to the local taxation account under each head for the year ended 31st March last are shown on page 55 of the last Report of the Inland Revenue Commissioners. No charge is made by the Inland Revenue Department for collecting the duties referred to. An annual sum of £40,000 has been paid since 1890–91 as the Exchequer contribution to Ireland under Section 5 of the Land Purchase Act, 1891, in consideration of the benefit which England and Scotland obtained when the licence duties were transferred to the local taxation account in Great Britain.

Royal Irish Constabulary—Interference with Religious Convictions.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Constable Gilbride of the Royal Irish Constabulary and stationed at Ballymoney distributes to Protestant members of the force Roman Catholic emblems and literature, and that some time ago, on the sudden death of Head Constable Moffat, Gilbride broke open his private box and extracted Roman Catholic literature which was addressed to the head constable from a sergeant in county Tyrone; and will he state what action, if any, he intends to take to prevent interference with the religious opinions of policemen.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): Abou three years ago the constable entered into correspondence on religious matters with the head constable, who was not a Roman Catholic. On the death of the latter the constable removed the correspondence from his own private box and destroyed it. The Inspector-General expressed disapproval of his action at the time. There is no foundation otherwise for the statements in the Question.

Pay of Royal Irish Constabulary Inspectors.

MR. REDDY (King's County, Birr): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the income (salary and allowances, etc.) of the county inspectors and district inspectors in the Royal Irish Constabulary.

MR. WYNDHAM: Information on these matters will be found in the annual Estimates for the Constabulary.

Tralee and Dingle Railway.

MR. NANNETTI: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in the negotiations between the Government and the Great Southern Railway Company for the taking over of the Tralee and Dingle Railway, any steps have been taken by the Government to safeguard the interests of the traders and travelling public by having, with places on the Tralee and Dingle Railway, a full and complete list of through rates and fares and suitable train service via the various ports of Ireland; whether, in view of the agreement between the Great Southern and Western Railway and the Great Western Railway of England to support the route via Milford, he will take steps to secure for the other various ports in Ireland that offer better and more expeditious services to traders that they should be placed on an equal footing, at least, with this company, more particularly as the Great Southern and Western Railway Company are not carrying out the obligations entered into under the Amalgamation Bill.

MR. WYNDHAM: I am not at present in a position to make any announcement on the first part of the Question. In reply to the latter part of the Question, the Amalgamation Act of 1900 contains numerous provisions for the protection of the interests of various Irish ports, such as Dublin, Waterford, Cork, and Limerick, as well as the interests of other places and districts. The Act contains, moreover, specific provisions for the settlement by arbitration of disputes arising in respect of the failure of the company to carry out its obligations. Under these latter provisions it is open to those affected injuriously to make application to the Board of Trade with a view to the determination of the matter in dispute by an Arbitrator to be appointed by that Department.

MR. NANNETTI: Will the right hon. Gentleman lay upon the Table of the House a copy of the agreement between the Government and the Great Southern and Western Railway?

MR. WYNDHAM: There is no agreement. The matter has not yet reached that stage.

MR. NANNETTI: What I ask is that before the negotiations are closed between the Great Southern and Western Railway and the Government, in which a certain sum out of the Development Grant is to handed over to the railway company, will a copy of the agreement between the company and the Government be laid upon the Table of the House?

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Wexford, N.): Will an opportunity be afforded for discussing this question?

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers, and as this is a matter that concerns my constituency, I would like to ask what are the conditions under which the line is to be given to the Great Southern and Western Railway Company?

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): I hope the right hon. Gentleman will answer that, and that he will be able to say that, after the expression of opinion he heard the other night, he abandons the idea altogether of giving the money to the Great Southern.

MR. WYNDHAM: I would rather not re-open the matter now. There is no agreement between the Government and the railway. If there was such an agreement I would be glad to give hon. Members an opportunity of seeing it.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL: I hope the right. hon. Gentleman has not abandoned the idea of getting this railway taken over by the Great Southern.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The Question cannot be debated.

Mr. NANNETTI: Before this sum of £20,000 out of the Development Grant is handed over to the Great Southern and Western Railway Company, will the right hon. Gentleman give Irish Members an opportunity of discussing the question?

Mr. WYNDHAM: We have already had a long debate on the Development Grant. I then stated a new Estimate was to be brought in, when another opportunity for discussion would arise.

Mr. NANNETTI: I take it the question is not yet finally settled?

[No answer was returned.]

Athlone Gun Licence.

Mr. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will explain why Mr. Newell, Resident Magistrate, Ballinasloe, has refused a gun licence to Mr. Thomas Mulvey, a farmer living near Thomastown, Athlone.

Mr. WYNDHAM: No application has been received from Mr. Thomas Mulvey. But one was received from Mr. John Mulvey. He refused to take out a ten shilling Excise licence, and hence the Resident Magistrate had no authority to issue to him a licence under the Peace Preservation Act.

Mr. REDDY: Was it not refused because the applicant declined to act as Public Prosecutor in a certain case?

[No answer was returned.]

Castlerea Police.

Mr. HAYDEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state the number of police stationed in the town of Castlerea, county of Roscommon; what is the population of the district entrusted to their charge; how long each member of the force stationed there has been in the town; and whether it is usual to leave any constables longer than a certain fixed period in any one place.

Mr. WYNDHAM: Twenty-one men, including the officer in charge. The population of the district is 4,233. The men have been stationed there for periods varying from less than a year to twelve years. There is no fixed rule on the subject.

Estates in the Land Judge's Court.

Mr. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will grant the Return standing on this day's Notice Paper dealing with the Land Judge's Court.

Mr. WYNDHAM: An inquiry was held some time ago in reference to the advisability of employing temporary assistance to enable an investigation to be made into the special circumstances of every case now pending in court, and after full consideration, the conclusion was arrived at that the cost of such an investigation would be out of all proportion to any advantage that could be derived from it. It is plain, therefore, that the preparation of such a Return as is asked for could not be undertaken by officials on the staff of the Court. I will consider whether some such Return can be arranged for in connection with the Return I have promised in respect of sales to, or sanctioned by, the Estates Commissioners. But, as at present advised, I can give no definite undertaking.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the clerks in the Land Judge's Department are absolutely under notice of dismissal, because there is no work for them?

Mr. WYNDHAM: I am not aware of that.

The following is the Return referred to:—Land Judge's Court. Return showing the number of estates in the Land

Judge's Court; the counties in which they are situate; the rents as shown by the last receiver account; the date on which the estates were placed in Court; and what proceedings, if any, had been taken for the sale of those estates.

Education Act and Religious Controversies.

MR. ERNEST GRAY: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, having regard to the desirability of finding some solution of the religious difficulty associated with education in public elementary schools, he will refer this question to a Select Committee of this House, or to a small Commission of Inquiry, in order that an accurate statement of fact may be placed before the country, and, if possible, some general agreement secured which might form the basis, if necessary, of subsequent legislation.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): As my hon. friend is aware, I have long held the opinion, which I have publicly expressed, that the present disputes about religious matters in connection with the Education Act are neither good for education nor good for religion; but I am not sure that the machinery which my hon. friend proposes would really do anything material to solve the problem, the difficulty of which everybody who has looked into the subject is fully aware of.

Rules of Procedure.

MR. DISRAELI: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, now that the changes in the Rules of this House have had ample and various opportunities of being tested, whether he will afford facilities for the individual opinions of Members to be freely expressed as to whether they find the changes to their convenience, or whether they would prefer to return to the former hours of meeting and sitting.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not quite sure what kind of facilities my hon. friend has in view. Does he mean a debate in this House? That, unfortunately, until the proposals of my hon. friend the Member for Essex come into operation, would give him but a limited opportunity for every Member to express his views on the very large number of changes that are effected by the Rule. If he means a kind of ballot or plebiscite of the House, I do not quite see how that is to be undertaken. To formulate the questions would be difficult, and I do not know that I could undertake the task or provide the machinery for taking the answers.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the possibility of meeting at 2.30?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! That is altogether different to the Question on the Paper.

MR. DISRAELI: My Question is meant to raise the point whether hon. Members may discuss and vote on the matters concerned as a family and not as a Party matter.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am sure my hon. friend carefully considered the matter before he put his Question. I am, however, quite unable to see how he would frame a Resolution which would give every Gentleman in this House an opportunity of stating his views. It must be a series of Resolutions, as long and probably as hardly contested as the original Resolutions I brought before the House. I do not know how long they took. I think they took up the time of the House continuously for several weeks.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Does the right hon. Gentleman propose this session to introduce the end of the Standing Order which remains without an end?

[No answer was returned.]

MR. CORRIE GRANT (Warwickshire, Rugby): Would it impose too much labour on the right hon. Gentleman and his secretaries to invite the Members of the House to express to him by letter what their wishes are in regard to the hour of meeting?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: That only deals with one of the topics referred to by the hon. Gentleman, and even that topic can hardly be discussed in isolation from the others. Everybody, beginning with His Majesty's Ministers, would like to meet later, of course. But the question is, what would you give up? Do you or do you not interfere too much with the general arrangement of the time which the House requires? Members of the House are always pressing me to give them opportunities for discussing this or that question; but while they make these appeals, as soon as I ask them to make any sacrifice of the general time of the House, then they are, perhaps naturally, reluctant to give the necessary facilities. All I can say about the afternoon meeting is that I have always regarded that as separate from the other Resolutions, and I have never expressed any final judgment on the precise hour at which we ought to meet. I am sure it ought not to be so late as to interfere with a good solid Second Reading debate in the afternoon.

War Office Council.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Perthshire, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Esher Committee was instructed to advise as to the creation of the War Office Council; what were the terms of reference given to the Committee; and whether he will lay these terms of reference in full before the House.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The terms of reference were "To advise as to the creation of a Board for the administrative business of the War Office and as to the consequential changes thereby involved."

The West India Labour Ordinances.

***Sir HENRY FOWLER** (Wolverhampton, E.): I wish to put a Question to the Prime Minister, of which I have given private notice, arising out of an incident in Monday's debate. In the course of his speech the right hon. Gentleman made a statement to the effect that the preceding Government—and by gesture indicated me as the Minister in that Government responsible for India—had included in the Labour Ordinances for Trinidad and British Guiana, with insignificant differences, the regulations contained in the Transvaal Ordinance. I ventured to contradict the statement across the Table, but am sure the right hon. Gentleman did not hear the contradiction, for he took no notice of it.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: What was it?

***Sir HENRY FOWLER**: That there were no differences except in unimportant particulars. The atmosphere of the House was at the time in a condition of which the right hon. Gentleman had reason to complain, and I did not venture to obtrude further interruption likely to involve a wrangle on a point of fact, not of argument. But now I desire to ask the Prime Minister whether he will lay on the Table copies of the Trinidad and British Guiana Ordinances as to the immigration of Indian coolies to which he referred in his speech.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I should be sorry if anything I said or omitted to say should be interpreted by the right hon. Gentleman as in any way a discourtesy to him. [Sir Henry Fowler: Oh, no!] What I said or intended to say was that the differences between the Ordinances were immaterial so far as the allegations of slavery were concerned, and to that opinion I still adhere. I think the right hon. Gentleman and the House have the right to the fullest information on this point. The Trinidad Ordinance is already in print; the Guiana Ordinance is not at present, but it shall be reprinted; and I shall be happy to lay both on the Table. Should there be any difficulty in obtaining copies of the Trinidad Ordinance, that can be reprinted too.

***Sir HENRY FOWLER**: The Trinidad Ordinance appeared as an appendix to another Blue-book and might easily escape notice; it will be convenient if they both appear in the same form.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: There will be no difficulty in complying with the request, which seems a very reasonable one.

The Royal Palaces Vote.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: May I ask if, in view of a desire to discuss the

Royal Palaces Vote, and especially the expenditure upon Osborne, it can be submitted at an early date.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I will keep the request in view, but it is inconvenient to give pledges long beforehand as to the order in which Votes shall be taken. I desire to consult the convenience of the House, and especially the natural critics of the Government, among whom I suppose my hon. friend may justly rank himself.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act for re-arranging the boundaries of the dioceses of Bristol and Gloucester and Bath and Wells." [Bishopric of Bristol Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the Law relating to Justices of the Peace with respect to residence, to qualification of solicitors, and to the removal of ex-officio justices." [Justices of the Peace Bill [Lords.]

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE BILL [Lords].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Thursday, and to be printed. [Bill 134.]

SUPPLY [25th FEBRUARY] REPORT.

ARMY SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1903–4.

Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [15th March], "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the Resolution, 'That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £2,700,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for Additional Expenditure, in respect of the following Army Services, viz.:—

	£
Vote 1. Pay, etc. of the Army	2,000,000
Vote 6. Transport and Remounts	2,100,000
Vote 7. Provisions, Forage, and other Supplies	2,030,000
Total	£6,130,000
Excess Appropriations in Aid (Votes 1, 6, 7, 9, and 10)	3,430,000
	£2,700,000

Question again proposed.

Mr. WHITE RIDLEY (Stalybridge) said that undoubtedly it was the duty of financial critics of the Government to examine carefully into the expenditure of every sovereign whether on the Army or other Departments, but he ventured to assert that in the criticisms passed on the expenditure by hon. Members they too often failed to bear in mind the proportion of the increase in the expenditure as compared with the total outlay. The Vote under debate showed an increase of £2,700,000. That apparently was a very large sum, but when they came to compare it with the total expenditure, which represented a considerable number of millions, it turned out, after all, to be a comparatively small matter. The expenditure mainly was in connection with the Somaliland campaign, and it would be well to bear in mind that it was almost impossible to foresee the cost which such an expedition would entail. For the first time in the history of the House these expenses had been presented in a full and complete form, and the House consequently had had special opportunities given it to consider the details of the expenditure. When hon. Members commenced to complain of the details he thought they ought not to forget that in past years they had not had an opportunity to consider such details, and they ought rather to recognise the public-spirited way in which the Government had acted in giving them. Unfortunately they had shown their gratitude for the outspokenness of the Government in a very parsimonious manner by entering unduly into detailed criticism. In regard to the operations in Somaliland, it ought to be borne in mind that they were undertaken on the full responsibility of the Government, and that a right hon. Gentleman, who no longer was a member of the Cabinet, had himself expressed the opinion that every member of the Government, at the time the expedition was authorised, was fully responsible, and had added the hope that the operations would be concluded with the least possible delay. The Secretary of State for War, too, had told them that the operations were proceeding in a satisfactory manner, and that no effort was being spared to bring them to a close. He therefore thought that the House should not be disposed to put too much blame upon the Government for the fact that the Estimate had been considerably exceeded. These expeditions, after all, were made in the interests of the honour and prestige of the British Empire, and any failure to carry out their objects would re-act with tenfold force upon this country. He had not risen to suggest any reduction in the estimate. His object had been rather to ask the House to realise that whatever increase there was in the Vote was due to no serious mistake in the original Estimate, but rather to the difficulties of the campaign, and he thought the money ought to be, and would be, ungrudgingly granted by the country, and by all who wished to preserve the honour and prestige of the Empire. In Somaliland they had a difficult country for operations, they had to deal with predatory tribes who had been in the habit of interfering with British subjects, and whose incursions, if unchecked, might have involved this country in a war of a far more extensive character. It was not possible, at the beginning of a small expedition like that in Somaliland, to realise the extent of the operations which would be involved, and no one who was not conversant with the country or who was ignorant of the character of the tribes infesting the district could realise the importance of effectually stopping the incursions, or could understand the difficulty of dealing with tribes who had no fixed habitat. He did not think, considering the distance of Somaliland from England, it could be said that the Estimate was excessive, and he hoped that the House would not be disinclined to vote the necessary sum for the continuation of the expedition, but, on the contrary, express its appreciation of the fact that in continuing this expedition the Government were acting with the full approval of the country.

*COLONEL LEGGE (St. George's, Hanover Square) desired to say a few words in regard to the first item of the Vote, that of "messing allowances." A few years ago an Army Order was issued granting the soldiers an extra sum of 3d. a day as a messing allowance. Soldiers, as they knew, got what was called free rations of bread and meat. They had a pound of bread and three-quarters of a pound of meat daily, but this extra messing allowance was granted to cover the cost of groceries, tea, vegetables, sugar, and everything of that kind. It had been the custom in the Army to make deductions from the soldier's pay for that purpose, but the deductions proving insufficient, two or three years ago it was decided to give the soldier an extra threepence a day in order to cover a portion of the cost. That was a very good thing to do, but like many other things done by the War Office, this was not carried out in the best possible way. Certain regulations were drawn up in regard to the issue of that messing allowance, and one of them was to the effect that the recruit was not to get the benefit of the extra threepence which the House of Commons had voted. Now the recruit was the very man who, above all others, wanted extra food. He required to be fed up. The Regulation, however, laid it down that no soldier should receive the extra allowance until he had been six months in the service, was nineteen years of age, and was certified by his commanding officer to have made satisfactory progress during the period. But it was during those first six months that the soldiers were in the most critical period of their service. They joined the Army, possibly, after having been for a period ill-fed, and, therefore, it was essential that their condition should be studied in that particular respect. For some years he had been trying to induce the authorities to modify the Regulation, but he had been unsuccessful. He had been told that the modification he suggested would involve a very great increase in the Estimates for the year. No doubt that would be so. Then, again, the argument had been put forward that it was not fair that the unskilled and untrained soldier should receive as much pay as the trained soldier. With that he agreed, but he held that the War Office had made the initial blunder of giving the trained and untrained soldier the same pay and then of reducing the allowance for food in the case of the untrained man. It would have been far better if they had given an equal food allowance to both, and had reduced the pay to the untrained man.

Another point to which he wished to call especial attention was the Order issued a year ago depriving Lancer regiments of the lance. That Order, he gathered, was issued in consequence of the report of General Ian Hamilton. With all respect to that gallant officer he wished to point out that he was an infantry soldier, and he (the speaker) did think that before the War Office came to a decision on the point they ought to have consulted other authorities who had had some experience in cavalry work. He was supported in that view by a report written upon the operations of General Egerton. The correspondent who sent home the report described a defeat of the dervishes, and declared that had the British force included a regiment of Lancers they would have been able to do far more execution than was possible under the circumstances. He hoped before long the House might have some assurance on that point.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth) drew attention to the excessive amount of the Supplemental Vote for Somaliland —£1,400,000. It was an instance, he said, of the difficulty of estimating the cost of operations in a country so little known and understood. It was important at whatever cost, that, having commenced those operations, we should see them through, otherwise we might lose prestige, and, however some might ridicule the notion, those who knew these countries knew that of all things prestige was the greatest factor for peace there. He rose to endeavour to impress on the Government the importance of carrying this Somaliland campaign through at all costs, because everyone knew how quickly news travelled in these savage countries, and they knew what effect any paltering and hesitating in Somaliland would have on the Aden hinterland.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) pointed out that this was a Supplementary Estimate, not merely for £6,100,000, but, in addition, for £3,400,000, Appropriations in Aid received by the Department in excess of the Estimate. If this Estimate were voted the effect would be to arrest the £3,400,000 on its way to the new Sinking Fund and divert it from being applied to the diminution of the National Debt. He protested against the system of Supplementary Estimates, which had the result of falsifying two Budgets—the one that had passed and the one to come—and was entirely destructive of the control of the House over finance. This system had been increasing enormously. During the nine years this Government had been in office the Supplementary Estimates, many of them, he admitted, most justifiable, had amounted to £95,000,000. He hoped the House would resolve in future to set itself entirely against Supplementary Estimates unless the case made out for them was of an overwhelming character. For nine successive years Supplementary Estimates had been introduced, and he thought the time had arrived when this and other financial matters should be taken into serious consideration, especially when, as in this case, the Supplementary Estimates involved the withdrawal of £3,400,000 from the Sinking Fund, which constituted the great security and bulwark of our national credit. He urged the House to resolve to set its face in future against Supplementary Estimates of any sort, unless they were shown by overwhelming proof to have been unexpected and unavoidable. They had an evil effect on the financial control of Parliament, and unless this House insisted on regaining the financial control it had lost, the most serious financial consequences would ensue.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 232; Noes, 136. (Division List No. 67.)

AYES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Aird, Sir John
Allhusen, Augustus Hen. Eden
Allsopp, Hon. George
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Rt Hn. Hugh O.
Arrol, Sir William

Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. SirH
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Baird, John George Alexander
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt.Hn. A.J.(Manch'r
Balfour, Rt. Hon. G. W. (Leeds
Balfour, Kenneth R. (Christch.
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir Mich. Hicks
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bigwood, James
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Bowles, T. Gibson(King's Lynn
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Campbell, Rt.Hn.J.A.(Glasgow
Campbell, J.H.M.(Dublin Univ
Cautley, Henry Strother
Cavendish, V.C.W. (Derbyshire
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Chamberlain, Rt.Hn.J.A(Worc
Chapman, Edward
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Coates, Edward Feetham
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
Craig, Charles Curtis(Antrim,S.
Cross, Herb. Shepherd (Bolton)
Crossley, Rt. Hon. Sir Savile
Cust, Henry John C.
Davenport, William Bromley-
Denny, Colonel
Dickson, Charles Scott
Digby, John K. D. Wingfield-
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir William Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt.Hn.Sir William Hart
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fergusson, Rt.Hn.Sir J(Manc'r
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Firbank, Sir Joseph Thomas
Fisher, William Hayes
Fison, Frederick William
FitzGerald, Sir Robert Penrose
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Flower, Sir Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Fyler, John Arthur
Galloway, William Johnson
Gardner, Ernest
Garfit, William
Gordon, Hn.J.E.(Elgin&Nairn)
Gordon, J. (Londonderry, S.)
Gore, Hn. S.F.Ormsby-(Linc.)
Goschen, Hon, George Joachim
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Graham, Henry Robert
Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
Greene, Henry D.(Shrewsbury)
Greene, W. Raymond-(Cambs.)
Gretton, John
Groves, James Grimble
Halsey, Rt. Hon. Thomas F.
Hamilton,Marq of(L'nd'nderry
Hardy, L. (Kent, Ashford)
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harris, F. Leverton(Tynem'th
Harris, Dr. Fredk. R. (Dulwich
Haslam, Sir Alfred S.
Heath, James (Staffords., N.W.
Heaton, John Henniker
Helder, Augustus
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J.F(Sheffield,Brightside
Hornby, Sir William Henry
Horner, Frederick William
Hoult, Joseph
Houston, Robert Paterson
Howard, Jn. (Kent, Faversham
Howard, J. (Midd.,Tottenham)
Hozier, Hn. James Henry Cecil
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Hunt, Rowland
Hutton, John (Yorks., N. R.)
Jameson, Major J. Eustace
Jebb, Sir Richard Claverhouse
Jeffreys, Rt. Hon. Arthur Fred.
Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir JohnH.
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W.(Salop.
King, Sir Henry Seymour
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Law, Andrew Bonar (Glasgow)
Lawson, J. Grant (Yorks.,N.R.
Lee, A. H. (Hants., Fareham)
Lees, Sir Elliott (Birkenhead)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Frederick N.S.
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col.Charles W.(Evesham
Long, Rt. Hon. W. (Bristol, S.)
Lowe, Francis William
Lucas, Reginald J.(Portsmouth
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
Macdona, John Cumming
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Killop, James (Stirlingshire)
Manners, Lord Cecil
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Middlemore, Jn. Throgmorton
Milner, Rt.Hn.Sir Frederick G.
Milvain, Thomas
Mitchell, William (Burnley)
Montagu, G. (Huntingdon)
Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
Moore, William
Morrison, James Archibald
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Mowbray, Sir Robert Gray C.
Murray, Rt. Hon. A. G. (Bute)
Murray, Charles J. (Coventry)
Myers, William Henry
Newdegate, Francis A. N.
Nicholson, William Graham
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Palmer, Walter (Salisbury)
Parker, Sir Gilbert
Peel, Hn.Wm.Robert Wellesley
Pemberton, John S. G.
Percy, Earl
Pierpoint, Robert
Pilkington, Colonel Richard
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Plummer, Walter R.
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Pym, C. Guy
Randles, John S.
Rankin, Sir James
Rasch, Sir Frederic Carne
Reid, James (Greenock)
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renwick, George
Ridley, Hn. M.W.(Stalybridge)
Ridley, S.Forde(Bethnal Green
Ritchie, Rt.Hn.Chas. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (Sheffield)
Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
Rothschild, Hn. Lionel Walter
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Sandys, Lt.-Col. Thos. Myles
Saunderson, Rt.Hn.Col.Edw.J.
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Seely, Charles Hilton (Lincoln)
Seton-Karr, Sir Henry
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Sinclair, Louis (Romford)
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Abel H.(Hertford, East)
Smith, HC(North'mb.Tyneside
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Spear, John Ward
Stanley, Edward Jas.(Somerset
Stanley, Rt. Hon. Lord (Lancs.
Stewart, Sir Mark J. M'Taggart
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt.Hn.J.G.(Oxf'd Univ
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Thorburn, Sir Walter
Thornton, Percy M.
Tollemache, Henry James
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw. M.
Tuff, Charles
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Vincent,Col.Sir C.E.H(Sheff'ld
Vincent, Sir Edgar (Exeter)
Walker, Col. William Hall
Walrond, Rt.Hn.Sir WilliamH.
Warde, Colonel C. E.
Welby, Lt.-Col.A.C.E(Taunton
Welby, Sir Charles G.E.(Notts.
Wharton, Rt. Hon. John Lloyd
Whiteley, H.(Ashton und.Lyne
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.
Wilson, John (Glasgow)
Wilson-Todd, Sir W. H.(Yorks.

Wodehouse, Rt.Hn. E.R.(Bath
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wood, James
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong

Tellers for the Ayes—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, Charles P.
Atherley-Jones, L.
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.
Bell, Richard
Black, Alexander William
Blake, Edward
Boland, John
Brigg, John
Broadhurst, Henry
Bryce, Rt. Hon. James
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Campbell, John (Armagh, S.)
Causton, Richard Knight
Cawley, Frederick
Clancy, John Joseph
Craig, Robert Hunter (Lanark)
Crombie, John William
Cullinan, J.
Davies, Alfred (Carmarthen)
Delany, William
Dewar, John A. (Invernessh.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Donelan, Captain A.
Doogan, P. C.
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, J. Hastings
Ellice, Capt E.C(SAndrw'sBghs
Ellis, John Edward (Notts.)
Emmott, Alfred
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
Field, William
Flynn, James Christopher
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gilhooly, James
Grant, Corrie
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Hammond, John
Hayden, John Patrick
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Frederick John
Hutchinson, Dr. Chales Fredk.
Jacoby, James Alfred
Jones, D. Brynmor (Swansea)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jordan, Jeremiah
Joyce, Michael
Kilbride, Denis
Kitson, Sir James
Lambert, George
Langley, Batty
Law, Hugh Alex. (Donegal, W.)
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cornwall)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, David
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lyell, Charles Henry
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
M'Crae, George
M'Fadden, Edward
M'Hugh, Patrick A.
M'Kenna, Reginald
M'Killop, W. (Sligo, North)
M'Laren, Sir Charles Benjamin
Markham, Arthur Basil
Mellor, Rt. Hon. John William
Mooney, John J.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Moulton, John Fletcher
Murphy, John
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nolan, Joseph (Louth, South)
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, K. (Tipperary, Mid.)
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.
O'Donnell, John (Mayo, S.)
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, Jas. (Roscommon, N.)
O'Malley, William
O'Mara, James
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parrott, William
Paulton, James Mellor
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, Robert John
Rea, Russell
Reckitt, Harold James
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rigg, Richard
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Roche, John
Roe, Sir Thomas
Runciman, Walter
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann, Charles E.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (Forfarshire)
Slack, John Bamford
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Sullivan, Donal
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.
Thomas, D. Alfred (Merthyr)
Thomas, J.A(Glamorgan, Gower
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Wallace, Robert
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Jn. Cathcart (Orkney)
White, George (Norfolk)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid.)

Tellers for the Noes—Mr. Whitley and Mr. Thomas Bayley.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. J. W. Lowther (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Moved to resolve, That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, the sum of £4,256,177 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Perthshire, E.) asked if that sum included the Supply which was not yet passed by the House. He thought it was irregular to introduce this Resolution to the Committee, which included the whole sum for the Supplementary Estimates, when they had only dealt with one half of them. Such a method of precedure was somewhat risky, because they had already reduced one of the items included in this sum.

*The **CHAIRMAN**: I understand that this Resolution includes all the Supplementary Estimates which have been considered by the House in Committee. It is quite true that some of them have not been agreed to by the House, but they have been agreed to by the House sitting in Committee. That being so, there is nothing irregular in taking the Committee of Ways and Means now, for that is the usual procedure which takes place at the end of the session.

Resolved, That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, the sum of £4,256,177 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

Moved to resolve, That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1905, the sum of £39,571,200 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES said he desired to raise at some stage of this Bill the question of Votes on Account being taken for six months instead of two months. He wished to know if it would be more appropriate to raise that point on the Second Reading of the Bill.

***The CHAIRMAN**: I do not think it would be in order at this moment, because this Resolution simply embodies the fact that this House has already agreed that this sum shall be appropriated for the Civil Service purposes of the year, and it is not possible to go back from that. When this Resolution is embodied in the Bill for the Second Reading, then it will be open to the hon. Member to discuss the matter.

Mr. WHITLEY (Halifax) complained of the way that this Resolution had been placed before the House. All the information they had about it was a notice on the Paper which read "Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer: To vote a sum or sums of money (in Committee of Ways and Means)." He thought the different items ought to be printed on the Paper instead of being left until the moment they were moved.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.) said the Motion had been put down in the way it was always put, and there were very good reasons for that method. In certain proceedings in Ways and Means it was almost impossible to give the exact terms of the Motion because those Votes were liable to alteration up to the very last moment, and he had known cases when the authorities at the Table had been busily engaged at the very last moment adding up the Votes in Committee of Supply to make up the Vote in Ways and Means. Therefore there was a practical difficulty about giving the House full details on the Paper, and he did not think there was any practical inconvenience in the form in which the Motion was placed on the Notice Paper. It was well understood that the sum asked for out of the Consolidated Fund would be the sum already voted in Committee of Supply, therefore he thought they would do well to follow what had been the usual practice.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES said that very few hon. Members actually knew what was the sum that had been put from the Chair. It might sometimes be difficult to place on the Notice Paper the exact sum, but he thought they ought to have more information on the Paper, and this was not the way in which the House ought to be treated. It was not respectful to the House or to the Committee to ask them to vote a sum which they knew nothing about. He agreed that this sum was largely formal, but he had known instances where a sum of £10,000,000 was sprung upon the House. He thought some form might be invented which could be placed in the hands of Members giving more details of the Votes with which they were dealing.

Mr. COURTENAY WARNER (Staffordshire, Lichfield) said the House ought not to be kept in the dark up to the last moment as to the details of any Vote. The statement which appeared on the Notice Paper was very vague indeed.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said what they were now asking for was sanction to issue out of the Consolidated

Fund all the money which had already been voted in Committee of Supply. It had been ruled that they could not discuss the different items which had been before the Committee for discussion, and the Motion was really in the nature of a formal stage authorising the issue of the money.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER said if they only knew what the Votes were it would be very useful. He should like sufficient information given such as would give them some idea of what they were going to discuss.

Resolved, That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1905, the sum of £39,571,200 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

TELEGRAPH [MONEY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, Westhoughton), in moving the Resolution, asked the House to allow him to postpone what he had to say in regard to the telephone service until the Second Reading of the Bill with respect to this issue of £3,000,000. This was a formal Resolution asking the House to allow an arrangement to be made for this sum of money for the purpose of extending and amplifying the present telephone service. This was not a new principle. It had been advocated in this House in the past, and he was glad to think that the proposals which his predecessors had put forward had been successively successful. The money the House was now asked to vote would be of a remunerative character. The increase in the receipts for the telephone service was growing very rapidly as he hoped, on the Second Reading of the Bill, to be able to show. On the Second Reading of the Bill he would give full details of the working of the Acts.

Moved to resolve, That it is expedient to authorise the issue, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any sums not exceeding in the whole £3,000,000 for the purpose of the Telegraph Acts, 1863 to 1899, and to apply the provisions of The Telegraph Act, 1892, to the raising of such sums.

*MR. McCRAE (Edinburgh, E.) asked whether the noble Lord would be able to say anything on the Second Reading of the Bill regarding the intention of the Post Office in respect to the acquisition of the National Telephone Company's undertaking. He understood that they had an opportunity prior to 31st December, 1904, of giving six months notice of their intention to acquire the National Telephone Company's undertaking.

LORD STANLEY said he would not be prepared to state more on that subject on the Second Reading than he could state now. The money now asked for was in no way mixed up with the question of purchasing the National Telephone Company's undertaking. There were negotiations going on at the present moment with regard to what should be done in the future for the amalgamation, or rather the absorption, of the National Telephone Company in the Postal Telephone Service. He was afraid that he should not be able on the Second Reading to make any declaration. He was in hopes that he might before very long be able to come before the House with some proposition. The money now asked was for the extension of the Post Office Telephone Service in districts where it was urgently required and demanded, and where they were unable to provide the service owing to lack of funds.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES asked whether the Resolution was to authorise the issue of the money out of the Consolidated Fund.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said the money was to be provided out of the Consolidated Fund. The Treasury was to have authority to raise the money by short terminable annuities.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said he did not think the noble Lord had taken the most convenient course in deferring the explanation. The noble Lord said this Resolution was formal, but when the Bill was brought forward they would be told that the House had practically agreed to this. He thought the House should be very careful before it agreed to impose on the Consolidated Fund, which was already overcharged, this further sum without any explanation. The Committee would not fail to remember that the bargain made between the National Telephone Company and the Post Office was disastrous. They were made to vote several millions—a million more or less was so small in this connection that one did not remember the exact sum—for the purpose of competing with the National Telephone Company, and, although he understood the noble Lord to deny it, the money now asked was really for the acquisition of the National Telephone Company.

LORD STANLEY: No.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Well, absorption was the word used. It might be that, having got three millions to develop the Post Office system, the noble Lord would require three, four, five, or ten millions for the absorption of the Telephone Company, with which the Post Office was now supposed to be competing. The present system was a system of competition with the National Telephone Company. He thought the time had arrived when the noble Lord should make a clean breast of his telephone policy. He was not going to attack the Post Office telephone system. He thought it was extremely well worked, and he could bear personal testimony to the excellence of the arrangements. There was scarcely ever a hitch or a breakdown. The basis of the bargain between the Post Office and the National Telephone Company had, he thought, been throughout disastrous. What he was afraid of was that a still further disastrous course might be entered upon with regard to the National Telephone Company, and the taxpayers might be saddled with an enormously increased cost. His opinion always was, and he endeavoured to impress it on the late Mr. Hanbury, that the Government should buy out the National Telephone Company, and he would rather the £3,000,000 now asked was avowed to be part of the sum for which the National Telephone Company was to be purchased. It would be for the convenience of the Committee if the noble Lord would give a little more information on the subject now. It would prepare their minds for the course he was going to take. If the noble Lord made the statement now he would find that when the Bill came on for Second Reading the conduct of it would be less difficult.

*MR. McCRAE said if the noble Lord made a statement now they would be able to ask Questions in an informal way, but that could not be done if the statement was postponed until the Second Reading of the Bill.

LORD STANLEY said he was perfectly ready to make a statement now. He hoped the House would take the statement once and for all, and that it would not be necessary to repeat it on the Second Reading of the Bill. In previous years £4,300,000 had been voted for the telephones by the Acts of 1892, 1896, 1898, and 1899. That money had not been expended, except as regarded the purchase of the trunk lines and in buying other plant. It had been used for the further development of the postal telephone service. The extra amount he was now asking was not to purchase any plant of any other company, but was to extend the trunk lines where required, and to create exchanges in places where there was now a great demand for the telephone. He had a long list of these places, but it would probably weary the House to read it. They were all over the Kingdom, and he was glad to think that the telephone was extending into districts where the telegraph had not reached, and that it was of infinite service in small towns where the telegraph was not of the same use. In round figures the expenditure had been as follows: On trunk lines £2,180,000; on exchanges in London £1,495,000; on exchanges in the provinces £262,000; and on stores and stock of telephone requirements £233,000. The total expenditure was £4,174,000, leaving a balance of £126,000, which would just carry them over the present financial year. The amount he was now asking was £3,000,000, which would be distributed roughly as follows—though he would not like to bind himself absolutely to the accuracy of the distribution, owing to the fact that demands must be met as they arose:—£1,300,000 for trunk lines; £1,500,000 for London exchanges; and £200,000 for provincial exchanges. Speaking roughly, this would carry them on for five years, but he should explain that if the demand for telephones increased in an even greater proportion than in the past the House would probably be asked to grant a further sum. It might interest the House to know something of the work done by the telephone. The number of conversations during one year of their operation was 12,895,883. The number of single conversations over the telephone compared very favourably with those over the corresponding plant in other countries.

The London exchanges had been the most expensive; but they were also most complete and of the largest capacity. There was only one thing which, he believed, people disliked more than the paying of taxes, and that was having the streets pulled up in front of their doors; and, therefore, it was necessary in taking up the streets and laying down pipes for telephone wires to have regard to the amount of expansion of business in the future. Accordingly a certain amount of unremunerative capital had been expended initially, but in after years that would be remunerative. At the present moment the capacity of the plant in London was for 40,000 subscribers, but they had just yet only 15,292 subscribers, so that only a third of the plant was in profitable use. But they were going to have an exchange for 6,000 subscribers at Hampstead and one for 2,000 subscribers at Ealing. It might interest the Committee to know that there were in London 1,094 miles of underground pipes, in which there were, at present, 110,128 miles of wires. These had all been provided for by the money voted by the Committee. Of course there were miles and miles of spare pipes only waiting for the development of subscribers to be filled with wires. He could not give corresponding figures as to provincial exchanges; but the increase of subscribers in the provinces to the Post Office telephones was from 1,259 in 1899 to 5,000 this year. It was in the smaller towns, with a limited number of subscribers, that the greatest increase had taken place; and the telephones there had undoubtedly been excessively useful.

While the expenditure had increased, he was glad to say that the receipts had equally increased. In the central exchanges in thirteen months the receipts amounted to £61,000. In regard to payment, as the Committee knew, there were two rates—a fixed rate which covered all charges; and there was also a fixed rate and a payment for so much per call. Ninety per cent. of the London subscribers accepted the second rate—a minimum rent of £5, plus 30s. as a minimum for messages, and a penny for every message after that. Now, the cheapest telephone which had been asked for was by the London County Council, viz., £10 per annum. He was glad to think that this latter rate, taking an average, worked out considerably less than £10 for the use of the Post Office telephones in the London area. It was slightly under £8, which was a great deal cheaper than had ever been contemplated as possible some time ago. As to actual profits, as he had said, a great deal of the capital was, so to speak, lying idle at present waiting to be developed; but the increase of receipts had been so great last year that he was sanguine enough to believe that next year the system would be a paying concern; and that in subsequent years it would be an enormously paying business. In the Report of the Postmaster-General last year the balance towards meeting depreciation and interest on capital expended was stated to be £6,155. He had had drawn up a statement on exactly the same lines, and that showed that they should be able to earn £48,000 next year—a jump which he thought justified him in saying that before long the Post Office telephone system in London would be more profitable than at present. It was for the extension of that policy that he was asking this money; and he hoped he had been able to show the Committee that he was not asking the Committee to vote money which would be for an unremunerative service. It had nothing to do with the National Telephone Company. They were going to extend the lines with which the National Telephone Company had nothing to do, and by extending the trunk lines they would be extending exchanges for which there was a great demand. The Post Office was therefore not competing with the National Telephone Company in areas where the National Telephone Company already existed, but they were getting telephones into towns and villages which under ordinary circumstances would never be able to get such a service. Moreover, they were building up a general system which would prove beneficial to the whole business community. His hon. friend spoke about the purchase of the National Telephone Company's undertaking. That was quite outside the present question. It was true that the Post Office was able before the end of the year to give notice to the National Telephone Company to purchase by arbitration unless they could previously come to some agreement.

Mr. LOUGH (Islington, W.): Must not the notice be given in June?

Lord STANLEY said he was not quite certain as to the date, and he would find out; but they could do it by agreement before. He believed that purchase by arbitration would be a very expensive thing to undertake; and he was much more inclined to accept the other alternative of making some amicable agreement. But that was not in any way bound up with this particular Resolution which he was now asking the Committee to agree to. If it came about that there would be an agreement, it would come up for approval by the House of Commons. He, therefore, asked the Committee to accept the Resolution which was to grant power to the Post Office to obtain £3,000,000 more money for a system to which the Committee had already devoted a large sum, which had been profitably invested and which in the future would show as large a profit as in the past.

Mr. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) said that before granting this £3,000,000, this was obviously an occasion for reviewing the Post Office telephone system—more especially from two points of view. The first was the expediency of handing over the telephone system to the London County Council instead of spending more money on the Post Office system; and the second was, what was to be done with the National Telephone Company? It was all very well for the Postmaster-General to say that after negotiations had taken place, the Post Office would come to the House and ask the House to give sanction to an agreement. That was a practice which the House of Commons had always condemned, because the agreements carried by private arrangement were invariably carried by the Government majority after twelve o'clock at night. The House of Commons had therefore no say in the arrangement. The same thing took place in connection with the purchase by the Government of the trunk lines from the National Telephone Company. The Government would tell the House of Commons, after they had made an agreement, that it was not judicious to go into an explanation of negotiations until these were finished. The House of Commons therefore found they were always stultified in their criticism. The Post Office had formerly made their own arrangements with the National Telegraph Company, which proved to be disastrous to the public interest. He suggested that the proper way, if the House of Commons was to have effective control over the expenditure of this £3,000,000, was for the noble Lord to say, on behalf of the Government, to what extent that money would be spent by the Post Office, or whether it would be handed over to the London County Council, as had been done in Glasgow, where the municipal telephone system had worked remarkably well. He did not suppose the Government were particularly anxious to extend the telephone business, or anything else, if they could get a local body to undertake the work and do it more efficiently, since they had control of the streets. The House had no confidence in any arrangement between the National Telephone Company and the Government. The officials of the company were far too clever for the Government officials, as had been shown on previous occasions. Under the Telegraphs Acts notice might be given six months before 31st December, 1904, if the Post Office desired to purchase the undertaking of the National Telephone Company, otherwise the company would continue until 1911. The company were anxious to realise now, while the present Government were in power, instead of waiting until the end of their lease, when they would be practically at the mercy of the Post Office. Obviously, the question of purchase was one which ought to be considered by a strong Committee of this House; and he thought the House should have an assurance to that effect. The expenditure of this £3,000,000 was inseparably bound up with the policy of the Post Office. He was astonished that the Postmaster-General should have imagined that this was merely a formal stage. The Telegraphs Bill was a money Bill and might be brought on after midnight, in which case there would be no opportunity for a discussion. He would, therefore, suggest the appointment of a strong Committee to consider the entire question before the money was voted. Such a Committee would relieve the Post Office of a great deal of responsibility, and would thoroughly investigate the entire matter.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER said it appeared that the £3,000,000 required would be raised by terminable annuities. Was that amount to be spread over five years and would the sum to be raised in the first year be comparatively small? According to the Postmaster-General the income from the Post Office telephones was increasing; and, therefore,it was more or less a good investment. He agreed, however, that the present was a most inopportune time to buy out the Telephone Company as the Post Office telephone system would be able to gradually elbow out the company's system. He certainly would deprecate any large sum being paid for the purchase of the Telephone Company at present.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said that the only accounts the House had in reference to the Post Office telephones also included the telegraphs; and, therefore, there was difficulty in ascertaining what the results of the telephones really were. The telegraph account showed a continually increasing loss. In 1903 the balance of expenditure over receipts was £601,000, the previous year it was £651,000, and the year before that £337,000. Even these amounts did not include all the loss that was incurred. He wished to put it to the House that this was a losing concern. It was said that the great house of Rothschild made its reputation and its fortune by following the dictum of cutting its losses and leaving its profits to run on. The Post Office was a losing concern, and to propose to put £3,000,000 into it was a very serious matter, and one not to be viewed with satisfaction. The Postmaster-General made a serious proposal to lump all the Post Office Votes together. He, on the contrary, would suggest that the accounts should be cut up, in order to show the exact working of the different departments. At present, the telegraph and telephone accounts were joined. That, in his opinion, was wrong. The two services were essentially different; and the accounts for each ought to be given separately. It was rather deplorable to find that, while the National Telephone Company was making very handsome profits, the Post Office was making a greater and greater loss. He asked his noble friend to contrive to give the accounts of the telegraphs and telephones separately.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) asked whether a portion of this money would be spent on an extension of the telephone system in Ireland. If so, he would gladly support it.

LORD STANLEY assented.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) said the loss on the telegraph service was nearly £1,000,000, and one reason given by the Post Office was the great use that was being made of the telephone. The life of the National Telephone Company would cease in seven years, and he would like to know from the Postmaster-General whether any arrangement was being made for buying the undertaking. The words of Mr. Arnold Morley were still fresh in the memory of the House. Mr. Arnold Morley said he would not give the Telephone Company more than the price of old iron for their undertaking. If that were so, and they could have some assurance that the country would not be called upon to pay an enormous sum for the company, he thought they would vote the money now before them much more cheerfully.

*Mr. McCRAE thought it would be a great convenience, in view of the possible acquisition of the National Telephone Company's system, if they could have the accounts presented separately, as suggested by the hon. Member opposite. So far as he understood, there was an option of purchase in 1904. But, if the Government were going to exercise that option, he gathered they would have to give six months' notice prior to 31st December. So there was really not very much time for the Government to make up their mind with regard to what they were going to do with the Telephone Company. He hoped that, until the Government had settled its policy on this question, no part of these £3,000,000 would be spent on competitive undertakings with the Telephone Company. They wanted effective competition between the Post Office and the company, but if the Government were going to acquire the company's undertaking, there should be no expenditure on any works which would be of an overlapping character. He should like to know from the Postmaster-General what period was to be taken for these annuities.

Lord STANLEY: Twenty years.

*Mr. McCRAE thought that was a very reasonable period for work of this kind. In view of the fact that they were piling up the National Debt to an extent which had not been equalled for many years, he desired to impress on the noble Lord the necessity for proceeding cautiously in this matter.

Mr. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick) expressed himself as being favourable to the extension of the telephone service in Ireland, but, at the same time, stated that a great deal might be said on the question of cost. As compared with the services of Norway, Sweden, and other Continental nations, the cost of the Irish service was prohibitive. In those countries the business was almost entirely done by means of the telephone, but in Ireland it was very seldom done in that way—the cost was too prohibitive. The telephone service was practically a branch of the Post Office telegraph service, and it ought to be at the service of the public in the same way. It should not belong to a private company, and he was at a loss to understand why the Government could not make a profit out of it.

Mr. LOUGH said the statement of the Postmaster-General as to the increased receipts from the London service had been favourably received; but he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give fuller particulars. Four-and-a-quarter millions of capital had been sunk in the undertaking; and £48,000 was not nearly sufficient to meet the interest and depreciation charges on so large a sum. He asked the right hon. Gentleman to state the amount of receipts for the telephone service for the whole country, whether the service was paying, and, if not, whether it held out a prospect of paying shortly. The Committee were obliged to ask for this information because the accounts as published included the telegraph accounts. It was essential that the accounts for the two services should be separated, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give fuller information regarding these accounts and state the amount of the net estimated receipts to the end of the year. The Postmaster-General evidently believed the business to be a good and paying one into which the State ought to plunge to a far greater extent. He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman, believing that, properly managed, the telephone service would be of the greatest benefit to the community, and that it ought to belong to the State. He was in favour of a progressive policy, but before a vote was taken the right hon. Gentleman ought to give definite pledges in regard to certain points. What was to be the policy of the Post Office with regard to the encouragement of local authorities to develop local telephone services? Did the Department intend to follow the course adopted by the National Telephone Company in buying up the Tunbridge Wells system, or would local authorities be encouraged to develop their local systems? Reference had been made to the splendid facilities afforded in foreign countries, but on the basis of the number of services to the population the Island of Guernsey had a system which could hardly be beaten. With a population of 40,000, there was a telephone for every thirty-three inhabitants; and although the service was exceedingly cheap, there was a balance of profit after all expenses had been paid. That was a good instance of the result of working the telephone system simply and economically.

The right hon. Gentleman had promised that the House should have an opportunity of discussing the agreement with the Telephone Company. If that promise meant that the agreement would be entered into and then the House would be asked to say "Aye" or "No" to it, it would be a most unsatisfactory proceeding. He was glad to hear that negotiations were going on; everybody would be willing to deal fairly with the Company, and it would be to the advantage of the State to take over the undertaking as soon as possible on fair terms; but he was anxious that the House should have fair play in this matter, as it had never been properly treated in telephone negotiations in the past. He suggested that the terms of the agreement, when drafted, should be submitted to a Select Committee with a simple reference, so that the House would know whether it was safe to go on with the matter or whether amendments were necessary. He was extremely interested in an experiment which at his suggestion the right hon. Gentleman's predecessor had carried out in an outlandish area in Ireland. In county Cavan the county town was connected with several sub-districts by telephone for the purpose of sending telegrams, and at his suggestion, the public in the district were allowed to use the telephone. The concession was a great advantage to the district, and had been availed of to a considerable extent. He believed that a similar arrangement might with advantage be made in many country districts, and he suggested that the right hon. Gentleman should take the matter into his consideration. In London considerable difficulty arose from the scarcity of call-offices and their inconvenient situations. Why should not every post office be made a call-office? Such an arrangement would be a great convenience to the public, and would tend greatly to increase the use of the telephone.

Mr. BRIGG (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley) complained of the unbusinesslike condition of the present arrangements between the Government and the Telephone Company. The company's licence expired in 1911, and consequently, whenever anybody asked for improvements to be made, the invariable reply of the Company was that they could do nothing as they were in the hands of the Government, and would be obliged in 1911 to give up all their rights and claims. Between the Government not buying and the company not selling the public were being badly served. The company were naturally averse to spending money on works which would last longer than the period of their licence, and he urged the right hon. Gentleman to endeavour to come to an arrangement which should come into operation immediately.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES said the form the raising of this money would take would be a sort of domestic loan and there would be no question of disturbing the money market. He thought it was advisable that the telephone and telegraph accounts should be kept separate. With reference to the purchase of the National Telephone Company by the State it should not be forgotten that that would involve a great increase in the number of persons employed in the public service. Already there were about 170,000 persons employed by the Post Office, and they represented a very serious danger to the independence of Members of this House. Consequently it was a rather serious matter for the Government to adopt any suggestion which might add a few more thousands to those already employed.

Lord STANLEY said the principal question was that of the future arrangement to be made with the National Telephone Company. His personal opinion was, notwithstanding certain dangers which he clearly foresaw, that the right thing was probably purchase, and purchase by agreement would probably be cheaper than purchase by arbitration. That, of course, was a matter for consideration; and he thought that in such a matter, where the amount paid would, for all time, have an effect upon the receipts from what would be a national institution, the whole subject must be thoroughly discussed. He would not like to decide off-hand, but he rather inclined to the proposition that a small Select Committee of the House should be appointed. Of course, however, negotiations must go on between the Postmaster-General and his representatives and the company, and not between the Committee and the company; and all he could pledge himself to was that the House should have every possible opportunity, so far as he could give it, for considering this agreement, and that no agreement should be in any way binding on the Government until it had received the assent and ratification of the House. He should endeavour to give opportunities for full consideration before coming to a decision, and very likely a Select Committee would consider any agreement he might propose. He might propose an agreement, and then ask for a small Select Committee, but he asked hon. Members not to bind him down in regard to a matter which he had not considered before he came down to the House.

Mr. LOUGH thought there was other machinery apart from a discussion in the House for the consideration of such an agreement.

Lord STANLEY said he would not pledge himself, but the agreement would be considered by those best qualified to deal with it. At the present time he would not bind himself by any definite pledge. The hon. Member for Edinburgh asked whether the Post Office and the company were overlapping. They were not in any way; the former was only dealing with trunk lines or with areas into which the company would not or could not go. He would be only too ready to help in every way any municipality that wished to start its own telephones.

*Mr. McCRAE pointed out that municipalities could not get an extension beyond 1911 unless a similar extension was granted to the National Telephone Company.

Lord STANLEY said he hoped that the present difficulty—that a municipality could not get an extension beyond 1911 without the company's receiving the same extension—might be overcome when they came to a general agreement. As to the suggestion of the hon. Member for Islington that every post office should be made a call-office, he was willing to consider the possibility of such a thing. With regard to the suggestion of the hon. Member for King's Lynn that the accounts should be kept separate, he believed that they were kept separate for London, but he was not certain how far that was possible for the telephone area of the three kingdoms. He thought separate accounts should be kept, and he would look into the matter to see if it was possible to meet the hon. Member's suggestion.

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the issue, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any sums not exceeding in the whole £3,000,000 for the purpose of the Telegraph Acts, 1863 to 1899, and to apply the provisions of The Telegraph Act, 1892, to the raising of such sums.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

SUPPLY [23rd February].

Resolution reported.

NAVY (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATES, 1903–4.

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £1,270,000 be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1904, for Expenditure in respect of the following Navy Services, viz:—

Vote 8. Shipbuilding, Repairs, Maintenance etc.:—

	£
Section I. *Personnel* . .	53,200
Section III. Contract Work .	1,254,800
	£1,308,000
Section II. *Matériel*:—	
Deduct Appropriations in Aid	38,000
	£1,720,000

MR. RUNCIMAN (Dewsbury) complained of the manner in which repairs were under-estimated, and also of the large sums spent on repairing comparitively new vessels. In two years the amount spent upon repairs had increased from £175,000 to something just under £1,000,000. This was due, no doubt, to the fact that repairs were now given out to private dockyards and also to the fact that the policy of the Admiralty had gone a great deal ahead of their original intention. He wished to refer to two or three instances of inaccurate estimating—a practice which showed itself in the Votes year after year. He would take three large vessels. In the case of the "Trafalgar" £46,000 was put down for repairs but the actual amount spent was £60,000. In the case of the "Minerva" the estimate was £32,000 and the cost £45,000; and the "Nile" repairs were estimated at £18,900, but the actual cost was £47,000. In careful estimating it was necessary that some margin should be allowed, and it would have been much wiser to have intimated to the House at the time that more money might have to be asked for to carry out necessary repairs. He should like to direct attention to four cases of a serious character. The "Circe," which was only ten years old, cost £65,000, and the repairs undertaken on behalf of the Admiralty two years ago actually cost £52,000. In the case of the "Leda," also ten years old, the original cost was £62,000, and her repairs under one undertaking, not accumulated, was £52,000. The "Halcyon," eight years old, cost £75,000, and her repairs amounted to £55,000. The "Jason," ten years old, cost £50,000, and the amount spent on her repairs was £52,000. Surely it would have been much cheaper for the Admiralty to have built new vessels, having the advantage of new designs, rather than to go on tinkering up old ships at a cost which would have provided new ones. He did not wish to labour his criticism of the system adopted by the Admiralty of repairing vessels at the net cost plus a percentage, but he must point out that certainly, in the cases which he had instanced, either the system was seriously at fault or else the Admiralty officials had not known what they were undertaking when they placed the vessels for repairs in private dockyards. He believed there were many other cases similar to those he had mentioned.

COLONEL DENNY (Kilmarnock Burghs) said that in the case of the vessels referred to by the hon. Member opposite, the repairs included new boilers and machinery, and, although he was not justifying the action of the Admiralty, he thought it right to point out that as the result of the alterations the speed of the vessels had been considerably increased in each case, and possibly the boats were much better now than they were when originally built. He was quite certain that the owners of the private dockyards who had undertaken the repairs were the last persons to shrink from inquiry into the accounts. Speaking as a member of the profession he desired to say that, although he was always against the spending of money on old articles because he thought that very often it was a pure waste of money, he still thought that when the Admiralty in their wisdom determined on the spending of a certain amount of money on vessels so that they might be ready quicker than new vessels, the system adopted was the best we could have.

MR. GEORGE BROWN (Edinburgh, Central) called attention to the Report of the Accountant-General, which had been issued since this matter was last before the House. He dealt with the Navy Appropriation for 1902–3, and pointed out that the system of contracting for repairs was attended with considerable disadvantages. The Accountant-General mentioned that in the first place experiments in this direction had been tried and had proved costly as compared with estimate work. A case was mentioned in which the cost was no less than double what it would have been under the ordinary estimate system, and the Accountant-General went on to show that the different yards had different methods of accounting. It, was therefore, an exceedingly difficult thing to calculate the amount which should be allowed for general expenses, and it was impossible to secure uniformity in all the yards.

The proportional charge for general expenses varied very greatly accordingly to the amount of extra Government work which there might be in any yard at any given time. He thought the variation in these percentages would astonish the House. The Accountant-General said that they varied in the case of cruisers from 19 to 40 per cent., and he mentioned one case where the percentage added was actually 65·7. His object in drawing the attention of the Admiralty to these points was simply to ask what was being done to remedy these difficulties. Had they arrived at some standard of percentage as to the method on which the general expenses should be calculated so as to secure uniformity among the different yards? The contractors in some cases made claims against the Admiralty for their proportion of expenses on what was known as finished works; that was to say, some of the machinery was bought from a sub-contractor at a contract price, and then the chief contractor made a claim against the Admiralty for general expenses calculated over this finished work. He wished to know whether a settlement had been arrived at in reference to that, and whether the Admiralty refused to acknowledge such claims at the present time. In the last debate on this subject a word was dropped from the Treasury Bench which led him to ask whether the cost of repairs in His Majesty's dockyards had been compared with the cost of corresponding work done in private yards, and, if so, whether a little information on that point could be given to the House. It seemed to him that a great many hon. Members would be glad to know that besides getting additional speed, the work was being done on economical and businesslike lines.

Sir FORTESCUE FLANNERY (Yorkshire, Shipley) said the hon. Member for Dewsbury had called attention to the fact that the cost of repairs on some individual ships in private dockyards amounted to about as much as the original cost. He did not suppose that the hon. Gentleman suggested that the present system was bad and that he would prefer the work should be transferred to the Royal dockyards. Everyone who had studied the question would admit that it was better to leave the Royal dockyards available for new construction and to have the repairs done in private yards. As to the system of paying for repairs by the cost of labour and material plus a percentage, he ventured to say that the hon. Member for Dewsbury would almost invariably have his own ships repaired on that system rather than by getting an estimate for repairs beforehand, for the simple reason that it was impossible to estimate the cost of repairs, whether the ships belonged to the Admiralty or the mercantile marine.

Mr. RUNCIMAN said he did not know what the hon. Member's reference to him had to do with the Admiralty. He wished to inform the hon. Member that his firm worked on the contract system.

Sir FORTESCUE FLANNERY said the hon. Member for the Kilmarnock Burghs had answered the hon. Member's complaint as to the cost of repairs by explaining the nature of the work done. It was sometimes better to carry out extensive repairs on an existing vessel than to set to work to build a new one which might have more modern features. So long as the Admiralty pursued the policy of having repairs done in private dockyards and paying on the ascertainment of the actual cost, so long would the House support them, notwithstanding the criticism of the hon. Gentleman opposite.

*__The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY__ (Mr. Pretyman, Suffolk, Woodbridge) said the hon. Member for the Central Division of Edinburgh was under a misapprehension as to the relative cost of the work done in the private yards and the Royal dockyards.

Mr. GEORGE BROWN said that he had read the Auditor-General's Report, in which that official contrasted the system of taking estimates in the ordinary way with that of getting repairs done on the cost of labour and materials; and stated, taking the accounts for 1902–3, that the latter system worked out very expensively. In particular, the Auditor-General gave a case where the cost of gun-mountings on the system of labour and material was double that of similar work done on ordinary estimates.

* Mr. PRETYMAN said there were reasons why that case could not be considered a test case. With regard to the present system there was no reason to say that the actual cost of work done in private yards was materially greater than the cost of that done in the dockyards. Some confusion existed with regard to this matter, because the great divergencies that had been referred to were not between the cost of contract and dockyard work, but between the estimate and the actual cost. It was perfectly evident that the estimates of the work framed in the dockyards before the ship was opened out could not be based on accurate information as to the work actually required—especially in regard to machinery and boilers. It had happened frequently that the cost of work done on machinery and boilers in private yards had been exceeded, but that did not mean that if the work had been done in the dockyards it would have cost any less. He agreed that it was desirable to make an accurate comparison of the cost of the work done in the dockyards and in private yards, and the Admiralty were now doing that, but he was sorry he could not now give the actual figures. However, an estimate was being made with regard to some of these large refits, now that the work was actually done and the full extent of it was known, as to what this work would have cost if done in the dockyards instead of in the private yards. As to the percentages, the variation to which attention had been drawn was really a fictitious one. It depended almost entirely on whether certain material parts of the expenditure on the ship were charged to the basis of the percentage or to the percentage itself. This was an entirely new experiment; and, being new, they were unable to lay down hard and fast rules to suit all cases; therefore they could not fix a certain percentage which would cover all cases. But as a matter of fact, if the different methods of calculating the percentage were taken into consideration, it generally came to 10 per cent. on material and 40 per cent. on labour or thereabouts. Another misconception was that this work had been given to the private yards in order to get particular work done more quickly. He did not admit that the work could be done more cheaply, or better, or more quickly in private yards than in the dockyards. But there was a very large amount of arrears of repair work which the dockyards could not undertake, occupied as they were with new construction as well as repairs; and these contracts were given to private yards simply because it was necessary to extend the area over which the work could be done. The hon. Member opposite had referred to the large increase in the Vote for repairs. That was because the Admiralty were working off arrears. But it was not a permanent state of things. As a matter of fact, only four ships were to be sent to private yards in the coming year; and the hon. Member would see that that expenditure was to be reduced in the coming year. The hon. Member referred to the torpedo gunboats, and pointed out that on some of these boats which had cost £65,000 when new, £50,000 had been spent in repairs. The particular duty of these gunboats was to accompany the torpedo flotilla, and it was necessary that they should have the same high speed as the torpedo flotilla. As the time had come when these torpedo gunboats had not the necessary speed, the alternative was either to build new boats or to put into the existing ones new machinery and boilers. It was suggested that new torpedo gunboats could have been built more cheaply than these were refitted. But that was not the fact. The Admiralty had now obtained what they wanted—twenty knot gunboats—and they had cost less than if they had built new ones.

Mr. WHITLEY said that the explanation of the hon. Gentleman was satisfactory so far as it went; but it did raise a rather alarming question that when the Committee voted £1,000,000 or £1,500,000 to build a battleship it was found that within ten years that ship was out of date, or that they had to expend large sums of money upon it. He thought it was possible on this Vote to raise a matter which was of great interest at the present time—he meant the subject of submarines.

Mr. PRETYMAN said that there was nothing on this Vote for submarines.

Mr. WHITLEY thought that the Vote covered the item for men, and shipbuilding, and the contracts for repairs and alterations. He would be surprised if the Item did not cover the Vote for the staff engaged in directing the submarines; and after the lamentable accident that had occurred the other day he thought it would be useful and desirable if the Secretary to the Admiralty could give some information to the Committee as to what steps were being taken to prevent the recurrence of such a lamentable accident. He hoped that the hon. Gentleman would give some assurance of that kind; and if he did so, it would relieve a great deal of anxiety.

Sir JOHN COLOMB said he would point out to the hon. Gentleman that there was nothing to say in regard to that sad disaster. It was purely a lamentable accident; and it was unnecessary to raise it on the Motion before the House.

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [24th February].

Resolutions reported.

CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

Class I.

1. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £7,300, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for Expenditure in respect of Royal Palaces."

2. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £18,800, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens."

Class II.

3. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £31,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for Stationery, Printing, and Binding for the Public Service to pay the Expenses of the Stationery Office, and the Cost of Reports of Parliamentary Debates."

Class III.

4. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £2,000, be granted to His Majesty to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for certain Miscellaneous Legal Expenses."

Resolutions read a second time.

First Resolution.

Mr. WHITLEY said he wished to move to reduce this Vote by £100. In Committee some discussion took place in regard to Osborne. He noticed that in the new Civil Service Estimates this Vote had been put into an item by itself. He did not think that that was in accordance with the pledge given from the Treasury Bench twelve months ago, when the Committee was distinctly promised that it should no longer appear in the Civil Service Estimates but would be transferred to the Army and Navy Estimates, where the cost properly belonged. He wanted to ask the noble Lord in charge of these Estimates whether he could not see his way, as had been promised by the representative of the Admiralty a few days ago, to put in an amended page in the Civil Service Estimates to carry out the promise given to the Committee twelve months ago. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out '£7,300,' and insert £7,200.'"—(*Mr. Whitley*).

Question proposed, "That '£7,300' stand part of the said Resolution."

Lord BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley) said that, unfortunately, he had not by him the report of last year's debate, as he did not know the hon. Gentleman would raise the question. They had no other option than to submit the Supplementary Estimate in the manner in which it was now before the House. As to the propriety of putting Osborne House on a separate Vote, he submitted that that question could be more properly discussed when the Estimates for 1904-5 were under consideration. The pledges which had been already given to the House on the subject would be fulfilled.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee) said he wished to ask whether any part of the expenditure connected with Osborne House was borne on the Votes for the Navy and the Army.

Lord BALCARRES said that under Statute Osborne House was maintained by the Office of Works.

Mr. WHITLEY asked if that applied to the entire annual expenditure.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY of the TREASURY (Mr. Victor Cavendish, Derbyshire, W.) said he understood that the Secretary of State for War would have no objection to the amount spent in connection with the Army on Osborne House appearing on the Army Votes.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES said that the noble Lord stated that by Statute the expense of Osborne House was charged to the Office of Works. If that were so, how was it that £60,000 was charged in the Navy Votes in connection with Osborne House. Surely the noble Lord was under some misapprehension. There appeared to be a mystery in connection with the matter which ought to be solved. A new Vote was put on the Estimates for Osborne House; and it had not been submitted to the Public Accounts Committee. The so-called explanation of the noble Lord only led to further confusion. Would the noble Lord deny that money was charged on the Navy Votes in respect of Osborne House?

Lord BALCARRES said that the site of the stables had been set apart for the purposes of the Navy, but they were entirely distinct from Osborne House.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES said that the distinction which was drawn was a very fine one. He still failed to understand why a new Vote, which was not submitted to the Public Accounts Committee, should be set up.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 215; Noes, 148. (Division List No. 68.)

AYES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Allhusen, Augustus Hen. Eden
Allsopp, Hon. George
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arrol, Sir William
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. SirH
Bailey, James (Walworth)
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Baird, John George Alexander
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hon. G. W. (Leeds
Balfour, Kenneth R. (Christch.
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barry, Sir Francis T. (Windsor)
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bignold, Arthur
Bigwood, James
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Brassey, Albert
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Bull, William James
Campbell, Rt.Hn.J.A.(Glasgow
Campbell, J.H.M.(Dublin Univ
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cavendish, V.C.W. (Derbyshire
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Chamberlain,Rt.Hn.J.A(Worc.
Chapman, Edward
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Coates, Edward Feetham
Cochrane Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
Cox, Irwin Edward Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis(Antrim,S.
Cripps, Charles Alfred
Cross, Alexander (Glasgow)
Cross, Herb. Shepherd (Bolton)
Crossley, Rt. Hon. Sir Savile
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Davenport, William Bromley
Denny, Colonel
Dickinson, Robert Edmond
Dickson, Charles Scott
Digby, John K. D. Wingfield
Dimsdale, Rt. Hn.Sir Joseph C.
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Dorington, Rt. Hn. Sir John E.
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir William Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hn.Sir William Hart
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fergusson, Rt.Hn.Sir J.(Manc.
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
FitzGerald, Sir Robert Penrose
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Flower, Sir Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (Warwick, S.W.)
Fyler, John Arthur
Galloway, William Johnson
Gardner, Ernest
Garfit, William
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.

Gordon, Hn.J.E.(Elgin&Nairn)
Gordon, J. (Londonderry, S.)
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir John Eldon
Goschen, Hon. George Joachim
Graham, Henry Robert
Greene, Henry D. (Shrewsbury
Grenfell, William Henry
Gretton, John
Groves, James Grimble
Halsey, Rt. Hon. Thomas F.
Hambro, Charles Eric
Hamilton,Marq of(L'nd'nderry
Hardy, L. (Kent, Ashford)
Harris, F. Leverton (Tynem'th
Haslam, Sir Alfred S.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heath, James (Staffords., N.W.
Helder, Augustus
Henderson, Sir A. (Stafford,W.
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hickman, Sir Alfred
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J.F.(Sheffield,Brightside
Hoult, Joseph
Houston, Robert Paterson
Howard, J. (Midd.,Tottenham)
Hozier, Hn. James Henry Cecil
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Hunt, Rowland
Hutton, John (Yorks., N. R.)
Jebb, Sir Richard Claverhouse
Jeffreys, Rt. Hon. Arthur Fred.
Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir JohnH.
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W.(Salop.
Kimber. Henry
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Law, Andrew Bonar (Glasgow)
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (Monmouth)
Lawrence, Wm. F. (Liverpool)
Lawson, J. Grant (Yorks.,N.R.
Lee, A. H. (Hants., Fareham)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Frederick N.S.
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col.Charles W.(Evesham
Long, Rt. Hon. W. (Bristol, S.)
Lowe, Francis William
Lucas, Col. Francis (Lowestoft)
Lucas, Reginald J.(Portsmouth
Macdona, John Cumming
M'Killop, James (Stirlingshire)
Majendie, James A. H.
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Maxwell, W.J.H. (Dumfriessh.)
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Milner, Rt. Hn.Sir Frederick G.
Milvain, Thomas
Moore, William
Morgan, D. J. (Walthamstow)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Mowbray, Sir Robert Gray C.
Murray, Rt. Hon. A. G. (Bute)
Newdegate, Francis A. N.
Nicholson, William Graham
Palmer, Walter (Salisbury)
Pemberton, John S. G.
Percy, Earl
Pilkington, Colonel Richard
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Plummer, Walter R.
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Pym, C. Guy
Randles, John S.
Rankin, Sir James
Rasch, Sir Frederic Carne
Reid, James (Greenock)
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renwick, George
Ridley, S.Forde(Bethnal Green
Ritchie, Rt.Hn.Chas. Thomson
Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
Rolleston, Sir John F. L,
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Rothschild, Hn. Lionel Walter
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Saunderson, Rt.Hn.Col.Edw.J.
Seton-Karr, Sir Henry
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Abel H.(Hertford, East)
Smith, HC(North'mb.Tyneside
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Spear, John Ward
Stanley, Edward Jas.(Somerset
Stanley, Rt. Hon. Lord (Lancs
Stewart, Sir Mark J. M'Taggart
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Thorburn, Sir Walter
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw. M.
Tritton, Charles Ernest
Tuff, Charles
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Vincent, Col.Sir C.E.H(Sheff'ld
Walker, Col. William Hall
Walrond, Rt.Hn.Sir WilliamH.
Welby, Lt.-Col.A.C.E(Taunton
Welby, Sir Charles G.E.(Notts.
Wharton, Rt. Hon. John Lloyd
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)
Wilson, John (Glasgow)
Wilson-Todd, Sir W.H.(Yorks.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wood, James
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.

TELLERS FOR THE AYES — Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Allen, Charles P.
Asher, Alexander
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Bell, Richard
Black, Alexander William
Blake, Edward
Boland, John
Bowles, T. Gibson(King's Lynn
Brigg, John
Broadhurst, Henry
Brown, George M. (Edinburgh)
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Campbell, John (Armagh, S.)
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Causton, Richard Knight
Cawley, Frederick
Clancy, John Joseph
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Craig, Robert Hunter (Lanark)
Crombie, John William
Cullinan, J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Alfred (Carmarthen)
Delany, William
Devlin, Chas. Ramsay (Galway
Devlin, Joseph (Kilkenny, N.)
Dewar, John A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dobbie, Joseph
Donelan, Captain A.
Doogan, P. C.
Duffy, William J.
Dunn, Sir William
Ellice,Capt E.C(SAndrw'sBghs
Ellis, John Edward (Notts.)
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Field, William
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gilhooly, James
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Hammond, John
Harwood, George
Hayden, John Patrick
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemphill, Rt. Hon. Charles H.
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Frederick John
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Jacoby, James Alfred
Joicey, Sir James
Jones, D. Brynmor (Swansea)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jordan, Jeremiah
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kilbride, Denis
Kitson, Sir James

Labouchere, Henry
Langley, Batty
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cornwall)
Leamy, Edmund
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, David
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lyell, Charles Henry
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
M'Arthur, William (Cornwall)
M'Crae, George
M'Fadden, Edward
M'Killop, W. (Sligo, North)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Mooney, John J.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Moulton, John Fletcher
Murphy, John
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nolan, Joseph (Louth, South)
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, James F. X. (Cork)
O'Brien, K. (Tipperary, Mid.)
O'Brien, Partick (Kilkenny)
O'Brien, P. J. (Tipperary, N.)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.
O'Donnell, John (Mayo, S.)
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, Jas. (Roscommon, N.)
O'Malley, William
O'Mara, James
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parrott, William
Partington, Oswald
Pease, J. A. (Saffron Walden)
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, Robert John
Rea, Russell
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rickett, J. Compton
Rigg, Richard
Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Edmund (Dundee)
Robson, William Snowdon
Roche, John
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann, Charles E.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (Forfarshire)
Smith, Samuel (Flint)
Soares, Ernest J.
Strachey, Sir Edward
Sullivan, Donal
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.
Thomas, D. Alfred (Merthyr)
Thomas, J. A (Glamorgan Gower
Wason, Jn. Cathcart (Orkney)
Weir, James Galloway
White, George (Norfolk)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid.)
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Noes—Mr. Whitley and Mr. Wallace.

Resolution agreed to.

Second Resolution.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said this was the first time this Vote had come upon the Estimates, and in order to give the hon. Member in charge of that Vote an opportunity of stating whether this amount covered what was to be expended or whether some further sum would be required next year, he moved that the Vote be reduced by £100.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the sum of '£18,800,' and insert the sum of '£18,700.'"—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

Question proposed, "That '£18,800' stand part of the said Resolution."

Lord BALCARRES said the works which this Estimate was intended to cover was the work from the Duke of York's steps westward. The extension eastward depended on the passage of the Vote for Metropolitan Improvements which was on the Paper.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork County, N.) criticised the increase in the revised, as against the original, Estimate. He expressed the opinion that the money spent on London was too lavishly spent, and thought these Votes should be scrutinised in the closest possible way. In this particular case he had walked over the district and had been unable to imagine even how such a sum could possibly be spent. His own idea was that the so-called improvements would be a disfigurement to the fine avenue know as the Mall. He could not see why the revised estimate should be three times the amount of the original.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution agreed to.

Third Resolution.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) asked whether, since the discussion on this Vote, the Secretary to the Treasury had considered the suggestion that all debates and proceedings affecting Ireland should be collected and published separately at the end of the session. The practice was adopted with regard to certain of the public Departments, and the Irish debates were kept in a separate form by the Irish Office. He understood the additional cost would be very small, and he hoped the Secretary to the Treasury would give a favourable answer.

Mr. VICTOR CAVENDISH said that since the matter was discussed in Committee he had given his attention to it. The hon. Gentleman was correct in his statement that extracts from *The Debates* were published at the end of the session for various Departments. The Irish Office, too, provided special volumes for themselves, but not under this Vote. He had decided to give an order that, starting at Easter, the Irish debates should be kept separate, and at the end of the session bound in the manner suggested. This would be done as an experiment for the session to see whether the separate volumes proved to be a matter of utility, and to ascertain how the proposal worked out in the matter of cost. He could not see his way, however, to distribute the copies free at the end of the session, as was done with the daily editions or ordinary volumes; that would be going much beyond the terms of the contract, but he would consult the authorities as to whether three or four copies could be placed in the Library. Many complaints were made of the increases in the Stationery Vote, but the House should note that whenever the Estimates were under discussion proposals were made involving extra expenditure. If Members required further records of the proceedings of the House—frequently of their own speeches—and alterations in the way in which *The Debates* were produced, he hoped they would not mind being called upon to vote the extra expenditure involved.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND thanked the hon. Member for his promise, and said that if he would look into the matter he would find that the cost of supplying free copies would be very small.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY (Somersetshire, S.) moved a reduction of £100 in order to call attention to the great delay which arose in connection with the printing of local Acts. Local Acts, until they received the Royal Assent, were printed by the various agents for the promoters, but they had then to be printed by the King's printers. The Acts had afterwards to be exceedingly carefully examined, and as the number of examiners was small great delay ensued. Either there should be more examiners, or the local Acts through all their stages should be printed at the promoters' expense by the King's printers, instead of by private printers. Private Acts were frequently of great importance to large local interests and to Government Departments, and complaints were constantly being made of the delay in the printing. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out '£31,000,' and insert '£30,900.'"—(*Sir Edward Strachey.*)

Question proposed, "That £31,000 stand part of the said Resolution."

Mr. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland) asked whether the concession with regard to the binding of *The Debates* was to be confined to Irish questions, or whether it would extend also to Scotch and Welsh matters. It would be extremely inconvenient if Irish debates alone were to be published in a separate form, and it would also, to a great extent, complicate the proceedings of the House. The better way would be to publish separately the debates affecting the different parts of the Kingdom, and bind them in a compendious volume afterwards.

Mr. J. H. LEWIS (Flint Boroughs) asked whether it was possible to accelerate the reporting and printing of *Hansard*. In this respect the British Parliament was vastly inferior to many of the Colonial Parliaments, particularly to the Canadian Parliament, every Member of which received on his breakfast table the report of the previous night's debate. If that was possible in Canada, surely something approaching thereto was possible in the Metropolis of the Empire. By the time the copy of *Hansard* was received, Members had lost interest in the debate of which it contained the report. About ten days elapsed before the daily parts were available, and Members who preferred the volumes had to wait from three to six weeks. He hoped the Secretary to the Treasury would endeavour to accelerate the pace at which the copies were supplied.

Mr. VICTOR CAVENDISH said he would make further inquiries as to whether the issue of *The Debates* could be accelerated. The progress was doubtless slow, but they had the terms of the contract to deal with. He would, however, do his best in the matter. The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland was apparently labouring under a misapprehension. There was no intention of making any difference in the copies now issued; the only alteration was that at the end of the session there would be issued a volume or volumes containing extracts relating to Ireland from the volumes of *Hansard* already published. Having made that announcement, a demand for a similar concession with regard to Scotch and Welsh debates was immediately made. He could not give an answer on that point at once; but he would consider the matter between this and Easter. As far as the question raised by the hon. Member for Somersetshire was concerned, that had already been brought to his notice and he was doing all he could in the matter.

MR. BLAKE (Longford, S.) thought there ought to be no difficulty whatever in regard to getting the local Acts. He agreed that the hon. Member had got himself into rather a false position by having agreed to supply the Irish debates separately.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution agreed to.

Fourth Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [15TH MARCH]

Resolutions reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

CLASS IV.

1. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £29,400, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for the Expenses of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland."

CLASS VI.

2. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £197,677, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, for making good deficiencies on the Income Accounts of the Funds for Trustee Savings Banks, Friendly Societies, and Post Office Savings Banks."

Resolutions agreed to.

REFORMATORY AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS (SCOTLAND) BILLS.

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for Second Reading read.

*THE **UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT** (Mr. COCHRANE, Ayrshire, N.) said that this Bill was to authorise the transfer of certain powers and duties from the Home Office to the Secretary for Scotland. This transfer had been recommended by two Departmental Committees. The object of the transfer was to endeavour to create greater interest in reformatory and industrial schools, and get the local people to take more interest in their welfare. With regard to the financial part of the question, in 1896 in England the contribution from the rates to reformatories amounted to £21,486, and the Treasury contributed £62,788. In Scotland £2,105 represented the rate contribution, and the Treasury provided £11,936. It was only fair to Scotland to state that the voluntary contribution showed Scotland in a very favourable light. The voluntary contributions in Scotland amounted to £14,000, while in England they were only £16,000, showing that the work of reformatory schools was very much appreciated by those who were familiar with the work. Considering that two Departmental Committees had considered the whole question, and that the Secretary for Scotland would be able to deal with any complicated questions which arose, he trusted that the House would now agree to the Second Reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) said there was not much objection in principle to the transfer of the schools to the Secretary for Scotland. As had been very rightly pointed out, the voluntary subscriptions in England were comparatively small compared with those of Scotland. When the management was placed under the Secretary for Scotland, he thought the voluntary contributions might be increased in many ways.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire) said there was no change to be made in the financial arrangements by the Bill. He hoped it would be the means of eliciting more interest in certain of these bodies than they had received in the past. It would make no difference at all in the relations between the Treasury and the local persons concerned in the management of the institutions.

MR. McCRAE (Edinburgh E.) said they ought to congratulate the Secretary for Scotland on this Bill. He understood that it was merely a Bill for unifying control, and giving larger powers to the Secretary for Scotland. In Edinburgh there had been considerable difficulty between the different authorities concerned, and he hoped that what was proposed by the Bill would be a step in the direction of putting matters on a proper footing.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

METROPOLITAN IMPROVEMENTS (FUNDS) BILL.

[SECOND READING].

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.) said he hoped the House would have some explanation of the measure. It was before the House last year, and he had hoped that they had then made an end of it, but it had come up again. He understood that it dealt with the balance of

the money in connection with the establishment of Battersea Park, and that there was a provision already in existence that the money should be applied for any general metropolitan purpose. By this Bill it was to be devoted entirely to the opening up of the new roadway to Charing Cross. This was a very questionable proposal. He protested against money which ought to be available for improvements in the poorer parts of London being used for the making of a road by which ground rents would be enhanced in the wealthiest part of the Metropolis. Unless there was a good case made out for it, the House ought to pause before passing the Bill.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said it appeared to him that the proposal in the Bill complied with the necessary conditions with respect to the application of the money. If there was an improvement which could be made for the whole of London, it was the one which would open up The Mall to Charing Cross, and thereby add another great artery to the Metropolis. By the provision of this additional artery enormous relief would be given to the traffic in thoroughfares where at present it was often congested. At the same time he was not sure that it would not add to the congestion at Charing Cross, and it might have been better to bring out the new road south of the Admiralty. That proposal had not been accepted, and certainly, as it stood, there was no improvement which had been made in the last fifty years that would be equal to this for the relief of taffic.

MR. WHITMORE (Chelsea) said the proposed improvement would benefit every part of London, and all sections of the population. He would therefore give his cordial support to the Second Reading of the Bill.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) said that Battersea Park was established sixty years ago out of money given to the parish by Parliament. There was an unexpended balance out of which it was now proposed to spend £15,000 or £18,000 in opening up The Mall into Trafalgar Square. He believed the proposed application of the money complied with the conditions in regard to the balance of the fund being devoted to metropolitan improvements. The extension of The Mall from the Duke of York's Steps to Trafalgar Square would give what would probably be one of the finest streets in the whole Metropolis. He agreed with the hon. Member for King's Lynn in thinking that it would give relief to the traffic in streets which were at present congested. Another advantage of the new avenue would be that the fire brigade from Scotland Yard would have much more rapid access to that part of London between the Palace and the Duke of York's Steps than was possible under present conditions.

SIR GEORGE BARTLEY (Islington, N.) agreed with the hon. Member for Battersea that this was one of the greatest improvements made of late years. He was afraid that great pressure would be brought to bear in order that it might be used for all sorts of conveyances. It formed one side of a triangle, and an enormous amount of traffic which at present passed along Victoria Street would be diverted to this road. He suggested that consideration should be given to the question of forming a shallow subway underneath the road which could be used for tramways and other conveyances. This was a pressing matter, for if the subway was not put in now, serious damage would be done to the trees, which were being planted should the work have to be done later. Subways of the kind he suggested had been made in Paris, Budapest, New York, and other places with great advantage in the way of facilitating traffic.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. VICTOR CAVENDISH, Derbyshire, W.) said that the only objection that had been urged against the Bill was that from the hon. Member for West Islington, who said that the money ought to be distributed over London. He thought the Government were fully justified in taking the action they had taken in allowing the money to be applied in the way proposed. He hoped that, after the reception which the Bill had met with that afternoon, Parliament would be able to pass it within a very few days, in order to allow the work to be carried on immediately and with economy. He quite admitted that the question raised by the hon. Member for Islington was most important, but he was afraid the Treasury would not be justified in asking Parliament to spend another very large sum on a work which had already cost so much.

MR. BROADHURST (Leicester) said he understood that the money was invested in Consols. Was £18,000 the present value, or was it the value when the money was invested?

MR. VICTOR CAVENDISH said he understood that it was the present value; and he believed it was estimated that that would be the amount required.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE (Sussex, Horsham) said that something should be done to divert from the principal streets, in daylight, unseemly traffic such as large vans containing dead meat, hides, soda bottles, and the like.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for To-morrow.

And, there being no further Business set down for the Afternoon Sitting, Mr. Speaker left the Chair until this Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

AMERSHAM, BEACONSFIELD, AND DISTRICT WATER BILL (BY ORDER).

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

MR. GRENFELL (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe) said that the only question in connection with the Bill was as to which of two competing companies should supply the district mentioned with water. The Amersham Company had the support of every local authority concerned, including the Buckinghamshire County

Council. He, therefore, hoped the House would give the Bill a Second Reading.

Motion made and Question, that the Bill be now read a second time, put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

IRISH RIVERS (DRAINAGE).

Mr. MACVEAGH (Down, S.) said that for the second time this session the fortunes of the ballot were kind to him. He was made the recipient of numerous congratulations on his good luck, but the subject allotted to him by his colleagues was of such a complex and intricate character that he fancied the congratulations of the older hands must have been marked by a tone of gentle sarcasm, for he found that it was involved in an almost inextricable mass of absolutely incomprehensible Acts of Parliament. He had never before had an extravagantly high opinion of the gentlemen of the long robe, as they were called, but he confessed that if he ever came across a lawyer who could make head or tail of the almost innumerable Irish Drainage Acts, he should be compelled to regard him with respectful awe and admiration. These Acts surpassed all understanding, legal or otherwise, and he pitied the lawyer who had to answer any question concerning them. The amount of money squandered on this matter by English Departments in Ireland—generally in open defiance of the advice of the people most concerned—was simply astounding; and he could not help thinking that more good would have been done if the Government had thrown a cheque for a hundred guineas at the head of some unoffending lawyer and asked him to bury himself for a month in these musty and contradictory Acts of Parliament, and evolve from the chaos one Act consolidating all of them, deleting the obsolete clauses and making uniform regulations for future action. Or, if they did not want to be reckless in their expenditure, they might give the Attorney-General a Parliamentary holiday for a month and let him try his hand at the work, and, painful though the wrench would be of parting for even a short time from the genial and learned Gentleman, they on the Irish Benches would, under the circumstances, do their best to sustain the bereavement with equanimity.

The subject with which he had to deal was, he admitted, of a technical character, and, except to those most concerned, uninteresting, but it was none the less important. The position was briefly this—thousands upon thousands of acres of the best land in Ireland were every year covered by a waste of waters. That involved from year to year an enormous financial loss; and although the magnitude of the evil had been impressed on successive Governments for nearly half a century, practically nothing had been done to abate it. Money had no doubt been spent, but it had been spent in such an erratic manner and on such ill-conceived schemes that the grievance was greater to-day than ever it was. The trouble arose from the neglect to efficiently drain the valleys of the rivers, or dredge or deepen the river beds; and if a proper scheme were put into effect the result would be not only to save the enormous quantity of property which was annually destroyed, but also to reclaim some of the finest land in the country, which was now lying waste. The only agent they at present had for absorbing the surplus water was the sun, which happily was not within the Government's sphere of influence; but what the sun took by evaporation it unfortunately returned in the form of rain, and its influence, like that of the Government, was, therefore, not entirely beneficent. It was certain that the solution of this problem would have an important effect on the climatic conditions of the country, besides increasing the area of cultivation and saving huge sums of money to the farmers interested, and it was a problem which modern engineering could easily solve.

The difficulty was so far-reaching and affected so many districts that he contended it would be absurd to attempt to deal with it in isolated cases. The question should be taken in hand not in part, but as a whole, and until that was done it was hopeless to expect that any material relief would be effected. The drainage was at present under the supervision of the Board of Works, of which it was safe to say that no Department of Dublin Castle was more utterly incompetent or more hopelessly out of touch with the wishes of the people whose interests it was supposed to watch. The local management was in some cases in the hands of some mysterious entities called drainage boards, but where the authority of these bodies began and where it ended nobody in Ireland precisely knew. How they were elected, or when, or by whom, or under what qualifications, was a veritable Chinese puzzle to everybody except the landlords, and the whole affair was a most instructive illustration of the imbecile character of this country's government of Irish affairs. Like the Board of so-called National Education and the Dublin Port and Docks Board, these mysterious drainage boards were responsible to nobody, they published no accounts, and all the people knew about them was that they had to pay the bill for all the vagaries of these bodies.

Consider the case of the Bann, of which so much had been heard, and on at least this branch of the question he thought he could bespeak the support of all the Ulster Unionists. He hoped to have, at least, the support of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, the Member for North Armagh, because he noticed in October last year that he said at a public meeting that the feeling in Lurgan was so strong about this drainage business that if the flooding was not stopped before the general election, his constituents would probably throw him into Lough Neagh. He also noted—for he was a diligent student of his speeches—that he said he was henceforth going to fight with his gloves off, and that he meant business.

He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be as heroic and warlike to-night as he was on a Portadown platform, and that he would not put on his gloves again merely because the Chief Secretary, in a brilliant flash of humour, had invited the poor farmers along the river banks to subscribe £50,000 towards the cost of the work. The Chief Secretary might as well have been a whole-hogger, when he was at it, and have asked them for £5,000,000, for he would be just as likely to get it. The £1,000 mentioned in the Development Grant was only a mockery, an election bribe. The Chief Secretary called it a "token-offering," but he preferred to regard it as a peace-offering to the electors of North Armagh, to persuade them not to throw their Member into Lough Neagh—at least, until after the next general election. Already those constituents were in revolt against the drainage tax, and were threatening to become passive resisters, and unless something serious was done they would be bidding open defiance to law and order, and causing pain and anguish in the heart of their representative. The grant from the Development Fund was nothing less than a farce, for the condition attached was an impossible one; but, quite irrespective of that fact, the question of the drainage of Irish rivers should be dealt with as a whole, and not in fragments. The story of the Bann drainage was an amazing record of mismanagement and muddle. The Board of Works started on the present scheme in 1846. They promised to complete it in three years, but it actually took them twelve years to execute it; and the cost, which this intelligent Board estimated at £109,000, amounted to £150,000. The district paid back in capital and interest £166,000, and all they had for it was a colossal monument of official stupidity and incapacity. The Royal Commission of 1887 ascribed the trouble to an engineering miscalculation, aggravated by defective construction; and since then the people had had to contemplate from year to year the submerging of large tracts of land under cultivation, the carrying away of the crops, the souring of the lands, and the destruction of the peat fuel, on which they depended for their winter firing. The people were thus reduced to poverty, and their health undermined. One of the local dispensary medical officers had put it on record that he had frequently seen whole families driven from their homes to take shelter on higher ground, who returned as soon as the waters subsided, and it could be easily imagined what the state of their health must be when they had to walk on wet and muddy floors, sleep in damp rooms, and breathe air impregnated with the effluvia from decaying and decomposing vegetable matter. The flooded area extended over portions of five counties, and the residents in the flooded lands were to this day taxed for the abortive drainage scheme. Simultaneously with the construction of the drainage works a system of inland navigation was established on the Lower Bann, at a cost of £104,000. The people were taxed for this as well, and it also had proved a complete failure. The people were not responsible for these blunders; and it was mocking the sufferers to ask them, after having wrung from them more than the whole cost of those blunders, to contribute to the cost of correcting them.

Another case was that of the Owenmore, the flooding of which affects three rural districts in county Sligo. That particular case had been engaging the attention of the Board of Works since 1847, and it was to-day in the same position that it occupied fifty-seven years ago. He would not attempt to recount all the inquiries, plans, and estimates that had been showered in liberal profusion upon this unhappy district; but he should probably be within the mark if he said that if half of their cost had been devoted to a practical effort to remedy the evil it might have been settled in 1848. The amount required was estimated in 1896 at £6,000, and the Government then promised to help; but that Government went out, and from then till now the Treasury could not afford such a colossal sum. The Treasury could find millions to squander on mad hunts after every new Mad Mullah that bobbed up in Somaliland, and they were not a bit disconcerted if they got no return but the capture of the Mullah's mother-in-law. The Treasury was satisfied, and if she was like the other mothers-in-law that we read of, the Mullah is probably equally satisfied; but the spending of £6,000 in the draining of the Owenmore was not to be thought of. Yet in this district about 5,000 acres of meadow, pasture, and tillage were every year laid waste, and over 600 families were injuriously affected by the flooding of their property—property for which they had to pay in judicial rents over ten shillings an acre.

The Suck was an important river, running through the counties of Galway and Roscommon. Drainage works were started there some years ago by the Board of Works; with a local drainage board, composed entirely of the landlords of the district. Very large sums were wasted by engineers under the two bodies, but the occupiers were not consulted, and were in no way responsible. The muddle became a scandal when, after some years, the funds at the disposal of the drainage board were exhausted, and they came to Parliament for further borrowing powers. It then became a question of continuing the extravagance, in the hope of preventing what was already spent from being entirely wasted, but the representatives of the counties concerned in this House opposed the proposals unless some popular representation was given on the local board and they succeeded in procuring a joint representation of owners and occupiers. This reform, however, came too late to be of real service, but from the date of the introduction of the popular element, corruption, extravagance, and jobbery ceased. So heavy and impossible had meantime become the burden that the Government felt constrained to give a free grant; but in the end this went to the relief of the responsibilities of the landlords. The ratepayers in the catchment area in Galway and Roscommon were now paying 2d. in the £ in the first place, and 1d. in the £ in the second; and, in addition, the occupiers in what is called the improvement area had had an assessment put upon them. These occupiers were to pay only for the actual improvement, and it was against the award of the arbitrator that they protested. It actually exceeded in many cases the rent of the holding, and in at least one case it amounted to £2 an acre, being much in excess of the rent of any land in the district. It might be added that, owing to the nature of the soil, there were along this river—as in the case also of the Barrow—instances in which the alleged drainage works had actually done great injury to the land—he referred to Callow Meadow, which was of a rich marly substance, but which was dried up, and rendered entirely unproductive, but even on this a high charge had been put. Surely the people of this district were entitled to ask for at least an extension of the time of repayment and a reduction of the annuity? But this had been denied them, and they now found that failure awaited them, and that they would have to give up their farms unless some measure of relief was afforded to them.

Mr. MacVeagh.

Let the House consider for a moment the case of the Barrow, which was the natural drain of the largest and highest table-land in Ireland. This river was navigable for boats of a carrying power of fifty tons, from the Grand Canal Junction at Athy to the tidal lock at St. Mullin's, a distance of over thirty miles. The Irish Parliament erected about twenty lock- and weirs, and then constituted the Bars row Navigation Company, to whom they transferred the custody and control of the river. This company were bound by charter to keep the works in repair, and to keep four feet six inches of water in the bed of the river. For sixty years two dredgers were kept working to effect this object, but since 1860 the practice had been discontinued. The river was therefore being steadily choked up, with the result that for part of the year the carrying power of the boats was reduced by half, and with the further result that in the upper reaches of the river the lands adjoining were much injured from flooding and from want of drainage. Great damage was also being done to the towns of Athy, Monasterevan, Portarlington, and Mountmellick, whilst the general health of the whole district was being most seriously affected.

He would point out that the present position, both on the Barrow and along the other rivers, was most injurious to the interests of the landlords, as well as of the tenants, and only a couple of days ago he had a letter from a local landlord, Mr. Gore Ryder, in which he wrote that, owing to the annually increasing devastation caused by the Barrow, one of his meadows, which within living memory brought £90 a year, and which within the last ten years realised £43, afforded last year only £16. In his own interests and in the interests of his tenants—most of whom had grown accustomed to from one foot to three feet of water on their lands and in their houses—he looked upon the present state of the Barrow as absolutely scandalous. From an economic point of view, the expenditure of some £250,000 would, in his opinion, afford to the riparian landowners and tenants on the Barrow results equally valuable to those which the great Nile dam had done for the Egyptians, which cost over £2,000,000. The Blackwater, in Waterford, was also subject to great danger. Embankments had to be maintained, and when the slightest breach was made in one of these large tracts of land were flooded. The landlords and tenants in most cases had agreements with reference to the maintenance and repair of these embankments; and he had been informed by the hon. Member for West Waterford that in connection with recent negotiations for the sale of some estates adjoining the Blackwater, it had proved to be an almost insuperable difficulty in the way of coming to terms that the tenant would, after purchase, be responsible for that part of the embankment adjoining his holding—a responsibility which he would not lightly undertake, and would want to have shared with other tenants whose farms would be liable to be flooded, even when situate a quarter of a mile away from the scene of the breach of the embankment. In such cases, therefore, the tenants desiring to purchase their holdings had to make a bargain not only with the landlord but also with their fellow tenants—a bargain based on considerations of risk of loss which it was impossible to apportion. This condition of affairs applied, of course, to tenants along the banks of all the rivers from which complaints had come. In no country that he knew of was such difficulty experienced in obtaining public money for such necessary works. Every nation except Great Britain recognised the importance of the subject, and spent lavish sums on it. Hungary, for example, had spent on the regulation of its rivers during the past quarter of a century no less than £22,000,000; Belgium, in the same time, £16,000,000; and France over £30,000,000. Germany had devoted £15,000,000, in nine years, to the same purpose; Holland over £15,000,000, and so on in every European country. These works were executed at national cost, and the rivers were nearly all free from tolls, with the double result that complaints of flooding were almost unknown, and a tremendous impetus had been given to the development of commerce and industry. Why was Ireland alone handicapped in the march of nations ?

He might say much about the neglect of the canals of Ireland, some of which were commenced generations ago, and had never been finished, and others of which were now lying useless and derelict; but if he were to do so he might help to complicate the passive question of transit with the active one of flooding. It might, however, be said with certainty that if a Frenchman, or a German, or a Belgian, or even a Sandwich Islander, examined the Irish canal question, he would be absolutely amazed at the stupidity of a system of Government under which such disgraceful results were possible.

It was one of the blessings of foreign rule in Ireland that we never got a Chief Secretary who had the slightest practical knowledge, or even impractical knowledge, of questions so closely bound up with the prosperity of the people. They heard a lot now-a-days about dumping, but they had been accustomed to the operation for generations, for had not administrators who know nothing about Ireland and cared less been dumped down amongst them in profusion? These benevolent Britishers came over, knowing absolutely nothing about the needs of the people, but in three months they claimed to know more about what the country wanted than the country knew itself. They strutted for a brief time on the Irish political stage, taking no interest in the work except in so far as it could serve them as a stepping stone to higher things. Occasionally the benevolent gentleman who was dumped down was intelligent, but no sooner had he applied himself to the problems of Irish Government than his studies were cut short by a general election, or a reconstruction of the Cabinet, or some other incident in English politics, and then another Englishman was sent over, and the same process was again gone through. He had only read of two Englishmen who had ever shown the faintest conception of the vast importance of this question. One was Lord Randolph Churchill, who made it one of the planks of the Tory platform for Ireland, who tackled the problem with sympathy and courage, and who—had the opportunity remained to him—would probably have educated his Party on this subject as he educated them on others. The other reformer was the present Prime Minister, who introduced several Bills dealing with it, but who was promoted to another sphere before his efforts had had time to fructify.

He should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman a few questions which might help to clear the air. First, did the Government intend to take any serious step to cope with the evil all over Ireland—to drain where drainage was necessary and to relieve taxation where it had become oppressive? Secondly, could nothing be done to sweep away the effete and incompetent Board of Works, or, at least, to reform its constitution? He was afraid the sweeping out of the Augean stables of this antiquated institution would be a task even more herculean than that of reforming the War Office, but it would be worth trying. Third, would steps be taken to secure on the local drainage boards the representation of local elective bodies? And fourth, would the Government frankly accept the view of every civilised country, and treat the whole question of drainage as an Imperial and not, either in part, or in whole, as a local responsibility? The whole subject was one of vast importance to the health, comfort, and welfare of thousands of families, and to the prosperity of the whole country, and he hoped they might have some indication that the Government was fully alive to that fact. He begged to move—

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is the duty of the Government to at once institute a scheme for the effective drainage, dredging, and improvement of the inland waterways of Ireland; and that in view of the great loss sustained, owing to floods from year to year, by farmers whose holdings are situated near the rivers, and the excessive taxation arising from ill-conceived schemes, this House strongly censures the Government for its persistent neglect to take steps to abate the evil."

Mr. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.) desired to associate himself entirely with the hon. Member for South Down in the Questions he had put to the Government—Was it intended to treat this question of the drainage of the rivers of Ireland as a whole: would it be dealt with as a national and not a local question? Were the muddles of the past to be repeated? Was each locality to be left to shift for itself with utterly inadequate assistance from the Government? He would like to say a few words as to the drainage of the Barrow. The people of his and adjoining constituencies had never been granted a shilling of public money to secure the abatement of the great nuisance of flooding. The Barrow probably drained a larger area than any other river in Ireland. Its drainage area covered 480,000 acres and 46,000 were flooded at intervals. They had that fact on the authority of a Commission which sat eighteen years ago. Since then the condition of affairs, bad as it then was, had considerably worsened; year by year the bed of the river was silting up and the area of country subject to flooding was extending. The drainage of the Barrow was a somewhat historic question, as the right hon. Gentleman well knew. The Irish Parliament more than once had it under consideration, and steps were taken to make a portion of the river more navigable, but a scheme for the improvement of the upper reaches hung fire. In the early days of the Union Irishmen were promised that the Imperial Parliament would do everything for Ireland that a home Parliament could do, but in this respect anticipations had not been realised, and the House of Commons had done absolutely nothing to relieve the scandalous state of affairs which existed in that part of Ireland. In 1884 and 1889 the present Leader of the House introduced Bills for the drainage of the Barrow, and it was proposed to give a large grant of public money and a free grant towards the drainage of the Barrow. But later they were told that the financial pressure on the Treasury was such that it was not possible to make the grant, and that even if it were made the locality benefited would have to make itself responsible for the interest on the money advanced. Under that scheme there were two areas of taxation— the improvement area and the catchment area—and to his mind it was perfect nonsense to expect either landlords or tenants, ten or twelve miles from the scene of the flooding, although within the catchment area, to tax themselves for the benefit of those who were directly advantaged.

The work of drainage ought to be undertaken, if only for sanitary reasons, for the flooding gave rise to much malarial fever. The flooding, he would remind the right hon. Gentleman, was largely due to the artificial obstructions which had been erected on the river. For instance, a weir had been constructed half a mile above Croomaboo Bridge, with the result that the natural sluggishness of the river had been increased. The removal of that weir would do much to facilitate the dredging and scouring the bed of the river. Of course, the mill-owner would suffer, but no one would desire that any injury should be inflicted on him, and he should accordingly be compensated. The extent of the flooding was serious, and he had himself known it possible to row across seven miles of cultivated land. Such a state of affairs would not be allowed to continue in any other country in the world. Nothing whatever had been done, either by private enterprise or by public money, and the condition of the Barrow district was worse than it was 100 years ago. Few Irish landlords had the necessary funds, and those who had, preferred to invest their money in other directions than the improvement of their property, while, naturally, no occupier would incur the expenditure with the knowledge that neither he nor his successors would retain the advantage of the improvement. He hoped that on this occasion the Chief Secretary would give something more than sympathy, and that the matter would receive the practical consideration of the Government. He begged to second the Resolution.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, it is the duty of the Government to at once institute a scheme for the effective drainage, dredging, and improvement of the inland waterways of Ireland; and that in view of the great loss sustained, owing to floods from year to year, by owners and occupiers of property near the rivers, and the excessive taxation arising from ill-conceived schemes, this House strongly censures the Government for its persistent neglect to take steps to abate the evil."—(*Mr. MacVeagh.*)

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) said he agreed with a good deal of what had been said by the two previous speakers. For his part he should be very much pleased if the position and condition of the British Exchequer permitted the Chief Secretary to bring forward a wide and generous scheme for improving the drainage and navigation all over

Ireland. But he was not blind to the monetary condition of the British Exchequer, and, of course, it would be an Utopian idea to conceive that the Government would propose at the present juncture of affairs a great scheme for improving the navigation and drainage of Ireland, which would probably cost from £15,000,000 to £20,000,000. He had had hopes that even with the means at the disposal of the Government they would have had something done. He took considerable interest in the question of the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland. Rightly or wrongly he conceived that Ireland was not fairly treated on the subject, and when the Equivalent Grant was given to Ireland he thought the House had gone, not altogether as far as he wished, but at any rate a considerable distance. The Equivalent Grant and the Development Grant meant the same thing. This money was not given as a gift or as a sort of charity. It was Ireland's right absolutely, and as they paid for it in taxes they had a just claim upon the Exchequer of this country to deal with them in the same way as it dealt with England. He thought the Equivalent Grant—and he spoke, he thought, for hon. Members opposite—would have become to Irish Members on both sides a sort of happy hunting ground from which they could get, from time to time, the game that would give a feast to all classes in Ireland that required it. But he had made a discovery. That happy hunting ground had been made a poaching ground. The Chief Secretary was, no doubt, entirely in sympathy with the Irish people and would, if he could, act generously towards them, but there was a shadow behind him that obscured and defeated the right hon. Gentlemen's emotions of sympathy and generosity. They ought to have had the Chancellor of the Exchequer at that debate. That right hon. Gentleman was run dry. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had established a claim on this Grant, because £75,000 of this £185,000 was devoted to securing the Treasury against loss in carrying out the Land Purchase Act. Not only, apparently, did the Treasury demand their pound of flesh but they wanted a large margin besides, so that under no possibly conceivable circumstances could the Treasury suffer any loss. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was new to his office, and, although a man of conspicuous ability, must depend more or less upon his subordinates. So far as he could make out these extra securities demanded by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in dealing with this Equivalent Grant, were probably suggested by some permanent officials. He had always found the Chief Secretary most sympathetic, but they could not live on sympathy. If he were hungry he would rather have a mutton chop than all the sympathy in the world. What they wanted was not only sympathy but money. The Chief Secretary said the other night it would be a very good thing if he and future Irish Secretaries could confer in public on this question of the Equivalent or Development Grant with Irish Members in the British House of Commons. He thought that was very wise. Sometimes Irishmen should bury the hatchet. On the present occasion the Irish Members were going to act together and fight the battle of the Bann. It ought to be a perfect Irish Assembly, because they had a statesman at the head of Irish affairs who knew more about them than the ordinary British statesman. But whether they agreed with the Chief Secretary, or whether they argued with him it was the Chancellor of the Exchequer they were fighting, and he was not present.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): A good Home Rule argument.

Colonel SAUNDERSON did not agree that it was a Home Rule argument. If Ireland had Home Rule, there would be no Development Grant, the Bann would not be drained, and he had grave doubts as to the condition of the Irish Exchequer. For eighteen years he had been pressing this subject, but had never succeeded in getting from any British Government anything but sympathy. Sympathy would not drain the Bann, and he thought the time had come when they should tell the Government that their patience was exhausted. No doubt the case of the Barrow deserved attention, but he believed there was no area in Ireland which had such a claim on the assistance of the Government as that of the Bann and Lough Neagh. His constituents had a special claim on the Government, because they had paid £166,000 for a scheme of drainage that had not been carried out, and their fields near the Bann and Lough Neagh, instead of being flooded to the depth of 1ft. 6in., were now flooded, during seven months of the year, to the depth of 2ft. 6in. That was a method of draining which might exist in Ireland, but it would not be tolerated in any other country in the world.

Hon. Members from England generally left a debate of this kind to the Irish Members. It was the same during a Scotch debate, when matters were left to the Scotch Members simply because English and Irish Members did not understand Scottish affairs. In this case Irish Members appealed to the right hon. Gentleman to see if he could not do something more than he had promised. They had a right to something more. The Chief Secretary had promised £50,000 to these farmers if they would provide another £50,000, but he might as well have put the amount at £1,000,000. His right hon. friend had said that he hoped that the drainage might be carried out under more auspicious circumstances when the money market was not so tight, and when probably better terms would be offered. He thought, if the Chief Secretary had asked the farmers to provide one-third, something might be done in the matter, but after spending £166,000 for nothing and having been drained only in a matter of money, was it not natural that these men who had suffered so many years should now be in a state of the utmost exasperation. He wished his right hon. friend had seen the necessity of sending for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who ought to take the responsibility in this matter. The responsibility for withholding from Ireland the assistance which justice demanded was a responsibility which he should be very sorry to have upon his shoulders. Upon this occasion Irishmen were united on the ground that this was a claim made upon the Government which every right-thinking man could clearly see was a demand based upon absolute and simple justice.

*Mr. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.) said this was not the first but the fourth time this session that the scene had been presented to the House of an absolutely united Ireland upon an Irish question. They saw now the kind of questions pressing for settlement that would come before an Irish Parliament, and which all parties in Ireland would insist upon having settled, and which for years and years they had been asking this House of Commons to arrange. Here they were considering this question with practically only the Irish Members present and the representatives of the Government, but when this debate came to a close it would not be decided by the Irish Members but by the predominant Party, which would send its representatives into the lobby to vote upon matters upon which they had not heard a single argument and who would vote in perfect ignorance upon this question. He was concerned principally in regard to the River Suck which had been referred to by his hon. friend. The General Drainage Act was passed in 1863, and under that Act a Provisional Order was passed in 1878 constituting the district around the River Suck a drainage district. Under that Order powers were given to a drainage board, which consisted entirely of the landlords of the district, and six years were claimed for and given to this board in which to carry out the drainage. At the end of six years it was found that very little of the work had been done, and another period of three years was given to this board. Further periods were given, altogether for five successive times, and in 1895 the work was finished. Then this board came up for a private Act to seek for an extension of time and power to borrow, and at the end of that period it was found that £172,000 had been spent upon the drainage of the district. Many of those living in his constituency had told him that their land had been in no way improved by this expenditure, but, on the contrary, it had been deteriorated. He invited the right hon. Gentleman to send some impartial person down to this district in order to investigate the matter. The question reached such a pass at one time that there was a danger of the tenants being absolutely ruined if they went on with the works, and in consequence of this the Government were induced to give a grant of £50,000.

This grant did not in the slightest degree relieve any of the tenants in the district, and whatever relief it did afford went to the landlords. When the money was all spent an arbitrator or valuer was appointed by the Board of Works to inspect the lands in the improved area. The ratepayers agreed to pay 1d. in the £ in the County of Roscommon and 2d. in the county of Galway, and they had made that contribution ever since 1895. The complaint he made was that the charge upon individual holders of land was grossly unjust and excessive, and arose entirely from the fact that the valuer did not properly value the improvements in the district. Anyone acquainted with the land in the west of Ireland knew that those charges were excessive. Case after case had been produced, showing that the improvements which were supposed to have been carried out by the drainage had cost £10, £12, and £16 an acre. He knew one small farmer who bought out his land before the drainage scheme, who was paying £2 an acre on account of the drainage, which included the amount put upon him as owner and occupier. The general amount seemed to be 10s. and 12s. an acre for the land in the River Suck district.

He knew that the Chief Secretary had been near the River Suck, and although he might not be an expert upon land he knew that land in that district, which was rented at 10s. or 12s. an acre, was often supposed to be rack-rented. Here there was a tax on it for drainage and supposed improvements of 10s. or 12s. an acre, and the people in the district would not be able much longer to stand it, although they had honestly tried to carry out arrangements which had been made on their behalf but without their authority. Not long ago a deputation of the ratepayers waited on Sir Antony MacDonald and put forward a very modest request. They simply asked that the interest on the instalment should be reduced, and the amount of the sinking fund and the period for repayment should be extended upon the basis of the terms upon which money would be advanced under the Land Act. That was a very modest claim, and under the Land Act money was advanced at 2¾ per cent. interest and ½ per cent. upon the sinking fund. What was the interest charged to the unfortunate owners of land in this district? They were charged as interest as high as interest and Sinking Fund under the Land Act, namely, 3¼ per cent. The present state of the money market did not affect this matter, which was a mere affair of bookkeeping. This money had already been borrowed on favourable rates, and therefore the Treasury could not lose anything by complying with the request of these ratepayers. Instead of asking for a reduction in the annuity and an extension of the period for repayment, they should have asked for a total or partial remission of the tax altogether. Not only were Irish Members agreed upon this point, but the landlords and the tenants were equally agreed in making this request to the Government. It had been sneeringly remarked occasionally in this House that Irish Members could not agree upon anything, but he would remind hon. Members that they had come to an agreement in regard to such a question as this and town tenants. All he asked for was that the Government should keep their promise and do, in this House, everything that an Irish Parliament would be able to do for Ireland. He urged the right hon. Gentleman to give this matter early consideration. It was a matter which was pressing strongly in the district. Farmer after farmer had told him that they would not be able to live in the district, and would have to clear out because they could not continue paying the rent and this tax, and he believed this state of things was absolutely true. All along the improvement area of the two counties of Roscommon and Galway this state of things was preventing the operation of the Land Purchase Act, because neither landlords nor tenants could afford to sell or buy whilst this tax was being imposed upon them. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would do his utmost to concede some relief to the people who were crying out against what they believed to be a great and pressing injustice which was preventing them from acquiring the land they cultivated.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.) said he did not claim to have an intimate knowledge of the various drainage areas which had been spoken of by hon. Members opposite, but he did claim to possess an intimate knowledge of the drainage of the Bann and Lough Neagh, and he intended to confine his remarks entirely to Lough Neagh and the drainage of the Bann. He contended that the question of drainage was more pressing in connection with the Bann and Lough Neagh than in any of the cases which had been cited by Nationalist Members. In spite of all they had heard from the other side of the House he held that the area comprised in the drainage system of the Bann was very much larger than any other drainage system in Ireland. ["No, no!"] At any rate it was one of the largest, and it was an area in which there was infinitely more damage done by floods, annually, and more human suffering caused, annually in this way, than in any other flooded area in Ireland. This question of the Bann drainage was a very old one. Apparently redress was not obtained then, and the people now were in the unfortunate position of being worse off in this respect than those of 150 years ago. He did not object to any of the claims put forward by hon. Gentlemen opposite. They were all part and parcel of the same scheme for the arterial drainage of Ireland. The question of the Bann was seriously taken in hand in 1847 by the Government, and works were started which, it was hoped, would afford a remedy, but for some reason or another the system failed. Various reasons had been given for the failure. The work entailed a cost of 30 or 40 per cent. more than the original estimate. Instead of costing £90,000, it cost over £150,000, and the works, instead of being carried out in three years, as was expected, extended over twelve years. Finally, the persons affected by this drainage scheme had to pay £166,000. If that work had been properly carried out originally, he did not suppose the people would particularly object to pay this extra sum, but for some reason—he did not undertake to say where the fault lay—the works had not been successful, and at present the state of affairs was infinitely worse than it ever was before.

This was a matter in which the constituency he represented was greatly interested. At the time of his election, a year ago, he traversed that stretch of country and saw for himself the extraordinary amount of damage that was done, and, after all, the damage was a small matter compared with the absolute human misery caused by the floods. He had visited house after house where the marks on the walls plainly indicated that the water had been nine inches above the floors, and he had seen men and women whose hands were twisted with rheumatism, and who were bedridden owing to the floods. Having seen these things, he was sure that the House would not wonder that he felt strongly on the subject. He contended that this was a state of things which should not exist in any civilised land. The constituencies which directly suffered from it had a very good case, and he would have no hesitation in voting against the Government to-night unless the Chief Secretary gave a satisfactory assurance on the subject. He was afraid the action of the people of the North had been too pacific. The Unionist Members who represented constituencies in the North of Ireland, which were chiefly affected, had been bringing this matter before the Government for the past eighteen years, and at the end of that time they were no further forward. This state of affairs could not continue, and something must be done. They had loyally supported the Government, and he thought it was time that some return was made to them. The Government seemed to have taken up the position that the Party to which he belonged were compelled by circumstances to be loyal to them. He did not ask for anything unreasonable or for any payment for their loyalty. He only asked for ordinary fairness when he asked that the Government should take some steps to remedy the state of things to which he had called attention.]

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.) said he wished to advocate the claims of the river Owenmore in county Sligo. It was not a navigable river. They had been agitating for many years in regard to the drainage of this river, but they seemed to be as far off from success to-day as when they commenced. In 1847 a claim was made by all classes in the county for the drainage of the river, and it was considered by the Government of the day, but afterwards shelved. Other claims had been put forward since then and still nothing had been done. The position of affairs in regard to the river was this. There was periodical flooding, and one day's rain was sufficient to cause floods that [destroyed thousands of pounds worth of property. This was an annual occurrence, and last year, owing to the exceptionally wet season, the damage done was something horrible. It exceeded anything in living memory. Judicial rents of 10s. to 15s. an acre had been fixed for land, which was liable to be submerged, and it sometimes happened that thousands of acres were rendered as useless by the floods as if they were at the bottom of the sea. It might be said that Sligo was divided into four rural districts, and that three of these were affected by the flooding of the river. Although many demands had been made on the Treasury for help during the past sixty years, there had never been a single penny of Government money spent on the necessary work. He urged that some consideration should be given to the claim now put forward. In 1847 it was estimated by the county surveyor that £8,000 would be sufficient to carry out a drainage scheme, which would serve 8,000 acres. The work could not be done for that sum now, because labour was both scarcer and dearer, but it was safe to say that £10,000 would be sufficient for the purpose. He knew farmers who last year lost their crops of hay and oats by the floods, and who, in consequence had to sell their cattle to pay the rents which fell due in November. The rents were exacted by all the landlords with one honourable exception, and that was Sir Josslyn Gore Booth. That gentleman was a Unionist, and he was glad to mention him as one who recognised his duty to his tenantry in the position of affairs then existing. He agreed to forego a year's rent. The hon. Member understood that an inspection of the river had been made on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, and he hoped the Chief Secretary would state the nature of the report received on the subject. The drainage of the river would do infinitely more for the people of the locality than the Land Act would do in twenty years.

*Mr. ROCHE (Galway, E.) said this was a matter of the utmost importance to his constituents; in fact the existence of many of them depended on it. £172,802 9s. 8d. had been expended in the effort to drain the Suck Valley. Of that sum £50,000 was a free grant, £13,000 was secured upon the county cess of the baronies and townlands in the contributory area, as provided by the Act of 1889, and the residue, viz., £109,802 9s. 8d. was advanced by the Commission from time to time by way of loan to be repaid. When the work was first instituted, the Government appointed a board consisting mainly of landlords and agents, but until the people and tenants were represented on that board large sums of money were wasted. One illustration of the waste was that dredges were built at the cost of £1,000 to assist in draining the river valley, but they were never used, and after a time were sold for old iron. He would quote a few cases of tenants in the immediate neighbourhood of the river. Patrick J. Green wrote from Ballinasloe—

"I hold from the hon. Lord Clonbrock a farm of 487 statute acres. My rent is £345, valuation £226, river Suck charges £79 7s. and ordinary taxes £36. By adding the Suck charges and taxes to the rent it makes £460 7s. per year, or 100 per cent. over the valuation. Unfortunately nearly all my land adjoins the river Suck, and last year it was ruinous to all the people living in the vicinity. I sold in July last all my callow meadows, and they came to £172. The following week the weather got bad, floods set in, and remained on and off for six weeks, with the result that all the hay was nearly swept away by the floods, or rotted on the land. I had to offer a reduction of from 15 to 50 per cent. and even more in some cases (although I would not get one penny reduction myself from the landlord) to try and induce the people who bought the hay to clear off the lots, as otherwise the meadows would be unsaleable next year. And up to the present I have not received one penny, and it is questionable if I will be able to collect £50. I am contractor to the Ballinasloe Asylum for milk, and at the time of the floods I had to sell my two-year-old cattle to make place for my cows, at any price, and they left me a profit of only 12s. 6d. each for six months' feeding. They had to go because the land for the cows was under water and I had no place for them. All this flooding is caused by the incomplete state of the Suck drainage, which has ruined a great portion of the land and left it valueless as regards the hay crop. The Board of Works states that the improvement is equal to the charge on the lands affected, and in that case the tenant, when getting a fair rent fixed, should be allowed for it under the heading of 'Improvements,' but the Land Commission says it is not equal to the charge, and between the two, the poor tenant comes to the ground. For instance, my second-term rent was fixed in December last, and although I should be allowed £80 under the heading of 'Improvements,' according to the award book, for Suck drainage, I was only allowed £43 by the Land Commission. This is a question that should be gone into, for if the Land Commission is right, the Board of Works has £36 per year for the past nine years belonging to me."

Another case was that of Mistress Andrew Manning, whose holding was sixteen acres, three roods and ten perches. She had to pay £177 8s. total charge which entailed an annuity of £7 19s. That very day he had received from his constituency a letter containing a list of tenants and the amount of Suck drainage charges they had to pay. He would quote a few. Bernard Beraghty had two acres; rent £1; Suck charge £3 2s. John Kelly had one acre; rent 10s.; Suck charge £1 10s. John Crowe had one acre and a quarter; rent 12s.; Suck charge £1 12s. Bridget Kenny had twelve acres; rent £11 1s.; Suck charge £12 5s. Michael Loughan had seven acres; rent £6 5s.; Suck charge £9 10s. 6d. Sir Anthony McDonnell recently, replying to a letter in regard to a deputation of charge-payers under the Suck Drainage Scheme, said that—

> "The only scheme of relief which the Government could, with any chance of success, urge upon the Treasury would be a prolongation of the term for repayment, with a corresponding diminution in the rate of the annual charge. To effect even this limited relief, legislation would be necessary, and it is improbable that such legislation could be restricted to the case of the Suck."

He trusted that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary would give serious consideration to the case he had presented, and if the tenants could not be relieved from the tax altogether, it should be spread over a larger number of years. I have been informed that Mr. Martin, who was employed as the Government valuer, at the time of the award, swore at the Land Court in Athlone only the other day, when the tenants sought relief in the Land Court, that in many cases the drainage had been an injury instead of an improvement.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover) said that a great many requests had been made in the course of the evening, some of them of a practical character, involving a large expenditure of public money. He had also been requested to refrain, in his reply, from using soft words, and he should try to be very stern and plain! He was not going to hide himself behind the Chancellor of the Exchequer; he simply, as a member of His Majesty's Government, said, that these schemes would cost a great deal of money, and of money they had none. The practical part was to consider what tax the Government should put on to provide the very large sums of money necessary. All these schemes at one time or another had been pressed on the attention of the Government. The district, he was told by the right hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh, had spent £165,000 on the Bann, but the right hon. Gentleman never alluded to the fact that the general public had contributed £109,000 to the same drainage work; and now they heard that the navigation was useless, and that nobody was satisfied. Therefore they must have a careful inquiry before throwing away any more money. At that moment an examination was being made into the case of the Bann, so that therefore he need not say anything more about it. [AN HON. MEMBER: When did the inquiry begin?] About a month ago. Most of the speeches differed very widely from the terms in which the Resolution was couched. The Resolution was an abstract Motion. It had to be so, because if it had been in a concrete form it would not have been in order. It would have involved an expenditure of £20,000,000, and that could only have been brought in by a Resolution in Committee of Supply. The second part of the Resolution was a vote of censure on the Government, because the House had not seen its way to sanction the expenditure of such a very large sum. The Resolution was a species of ukase addressed to the Government, but he would have thought that, after the declaration of the Leader of the Party opposite, this order should have been issued rather to their successors than to themselves. If the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Party opposite had been present, he confessed he would have been more curious to hear his views about the projected expenditure of £20,000,000 in Ireland than anxious to express his own views. The proposal was an invitation to spend a great deal of money. Well, they had not got it. Or it was an invitation to alter the terms on which money had been lent for the objects under consideration. Could anyone seriously suggest that at a time when no municipality could float a loan they should alarm everybody interested in local finance by announcing an intention to alter the terms on which this money had been lent in Ireland? It was also suggested that they should enter upon administrative reforms, but these could not be acceptably proposed to the House unless accompanied by financial reforms. Hon. Members who knew nothing about the Irish drainage question might think from the debate that nothing had been done by the Government, whereas nearly £2,400,000 of the amount spent for that purpose had been from public money given and never repaid. The policy of the Government since 1863 had been, in Ireland as in England, a policy of assisting private initiative. If it were possible, the development of the waterways of Ireland would be an excellent work to undertake, but it was not possible. Would any Member, when the Budget was brought forward, propose a great tax for such a purpose? Since 1889 there had been in operation a policy of grants to Ireland for reproductive works, for railways, for local government, for technical instruction, for objects which the representatives of Ireland preferred to arterial drainage schemes; not once had the voice of Ireland said drainage schemes would be preferred. Though now the voice of United Ireland made this proposal, he would not be surprised if another proposal were made next year.

*MR. DELANY (Queen's County Ossory), said he desired to congratulate his country on having an united Ireland in this House. It was a foretaste of what the Irish Parliament would be. The Chief Secretary a few days previously admitted that taxation in Ireland had increased, and yet the Irish Members were now met with the reply that there was no money available for drainage purposes in Ireland. Would that be the case if Ireland had the management of its own affairs? The Irish Members had succeeded in bringing a most damaging indictment against the Government. They had an united Ireland, making a reasonable demand, supported by arguments which the right hon. Gentleman did not attempt to answer. Was not the preservation of the lives and the health of people in Ireland worth the expenditure of public money? The demand of the Irish Members had not been satisfactorily met, though he had no doubt that united Ireland would be voted down by a majority of Englishmen.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 114; Noes, 130. (Division List No. 69.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, Charles P.
Ambrose, Robert
Asher, Alexander
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Bayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)
Bell, Richard
Black, Alexander William
Boland, John
Brigg, John
Burke, E. Haviland-
Caldwell, James
Campbell, John (Armagh, S.)
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Craig, Charles Curtis(Antrim,S.
Cullinan, J.
Delany, William
Devlin, Joseph (Kilkenny, N.)
Dobbie, Joseph
Doogan, P. C.
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, J. Hastings
Ellis, John Edward (Notts.)
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Field, William
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, J. M. F.
Gilhooly, James
Gladstone, Rt.Hn. Herb. John
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Hammond, John
Harmsworth, R. Leicester
Hayden, John Patrick
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemphill, Rt. Hon. Charles H.
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Frederick John
Jameson, Major J. Eustace
Joicey, Sir James
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jordan, Jeremiah
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kilbride, Denis
Labouchere, Henry
Lambert, George
Langley, Batty
Law, Hugh Alex. (Donegal, W,)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leamy, Edmund
Levy, Maurice
Lloyd-George, David
Lonsdale John Brownlee
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
M'Crae, George
M'Fadden, Edward
M'Hugh, Patrick A.
M'Killop, W. (Sligo, North)
Mooney, John J.
Moore, William
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Murphy, John
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nolan, Col. J. P. (Galway, N.)
Nolan, Joseph (Louth, South)
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, K. (Tipperary, Mid.)
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.
O'Donnell, John (Mayo, S.)
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, Jas. (Roscommon, N.)
O'Malley, William
O'Mara, James
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parrott, William
Pease, J. A. (Saffron Walden)
Power, Patrick Joseph
Priestley, Arthur
Reckitt, Harold James
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
Roche, John
Roe, Sir Thomas
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Saunderson, Rt.Hn.Col.Edw.J.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Soares, Ernest J.
Sullivan, Donal
Thomas, D. Alfred (Merthyr)
Toulmin, George

Wason, Jn. Cathcart (Orkney)
White, George (Norfolk)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitley, J. H. (Halifax)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid.)
Wood, James

Tellers for the Ayes—Sir Thomas Esmonde and Captain Donelan.

NOES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arrol, Sir William
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt.Hn.Sir H.
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt.Hn. A.J. (Manch'r
Balfour, Rt. Hon. G. W. (Leeds
Balfour, Kenneth, R. (Christch
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bignold, Arthur
Bond, Edward
Brassey, Albert
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cavendish, V.C.W. (Derbyshire
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Chamberlain, Rt.Hn.J.A(Worc
Chapman, Edward
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Coates, Edward Feetham
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Coghill, Doulgas Harry
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
Crossley, Rt. Hon. Sir Savile
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Davenport, William Bromley-
Davies, Sir H. D. (Chatham)
Dickson, Charles Scott
Digby, John K. D. Wingfield-
Dimsdale, Rt. Hn. Sir JosephC.
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph
Doughty, George
Doulgas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Doxford, Sir William Theodore
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt.Hn.Sir William Hart
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (Warwick, S.W.)
Fyler, John Arthur
Galloway, William Johnson
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Gordon, Hn.J.E.(Elgin&Nairn)
Graham, Henry Robert
Gray. Ernest (West Ham)
Greene, Henry D.(Shrewsbury)
Greene, W. Raymond-(Cambs.
Grenfell, William Henry
Gretton, John
Groves, James Grimble
Hamilton,Marq of(L'nd'nderry
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harris, F. Leverton (Tynem'th
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J.F.(Sheffield,Brightside
Hoult, Joseph
Hunt, Rowland
Jebb, Sir Richard Claverhouse
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir JohnH.
Keswick, William
Law, Andrew Bonar (Glasgow)
Lawson, J. Grant (Yorks.,N.R.
Lee, A. H. (Hants., Fareham)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Frederick N.S.
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Long, Rt. Hon. W. (Bristol, S.)
Lowther, C. (Cumb., Eskdale)
Lucas, Col. Francis (Lowestoft)
Lucas, Reginald J.(Portsmouth
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
M'Killop, James (Stirlingshire)
Majendie, James A. H.
Manners, Lord Cecil
Maxwell, W.J.H. (Dumfriessh.)
Milvain, Thomas
Montagu, G. (Huntingdon)
Montagu, Hn. J. Scott (Hants.)
Morgan, D. J. (Walthamstow)
Morrell, George Herbert
Mount, William Arthur
Murray, Rt. Hon. A. G. (Bute)
Murray, Charles J. (Coventry)
Nicholson, William Graham
Peel, Hn.Wm.Robert Wellesley
Percy, Earl
Pilkington, Colonel Richard
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Plummer, Walter R.
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Randles, John S.
Rankin, Sir James
Reid, James (Greenock)
Ridley, Hn. M. W.(Stalybridge
Roberts, Samuel (Sheffield)
Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
Rothschild, Hn. Lionel Walter
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rucherford. W. W. (Liverpool)
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Seely, Charles Hilton (Lincoln)
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Sinclair, Louis (Romford)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Smith, Abel H.(Hertford, East)
Smith, HC(North'mb.Tyneside
Spear, John Ward
Stanley, Rt. Hon. Lord (Lancs.
Stewart, Sir Mark J. M'Taggart
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw. M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Vincent, Sir Edgar (Exeter)
Walrond, Rt.Hn.Sir William.H
Welby, Lt.-Col.A.C.E(Taunton
Whiteley, H.(Ashton und.Lyne
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

Tellers for the Noes—Sir Alexander Acland - Hood and Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

On the Motion for the Adjournment of the House,

Sir A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somersetshire, Wellington) said that, owing to the rapidity with which Supply had been granted that day, the Government would be able to proceed with Bills. The first Order for Wednesday would be the Second Reading of the Police (Superannuation) Bill; the next the Second Reading of the Penal Servitude Bill; and then the Report of the Resolution agreed to in Ways and Means, on which the Appropriation Bill would be founded, and the Report of the Resolution on which to found the Telegraph (Money) Bill. The Licensing Bill would be taken after Easter.

Adjourned at a quarter after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 23rd March, 1904.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Bishop's Stortford and District Gas Bill. As amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time.

Great Central and Midland Joint Railways Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP E).

Sir Alexander Hargreaves Brown reported from the Committee on Group E of Private Bills; That, at the meeting of the Committee this day, a letter was received from Mr. Vaughan-Davies, one of the Members of the said Committee, stating that he was unable, on account of illness, to attend the Committee this day.

Report to lie upon the Table.

PETITIONS.

LICENCES (RENEWAL).

Petitions against alteration of Law; from Peckham; Cardiff (two); Welshpool; Penygraig; Sneinton; Streatham; Fochriw; Waenfaur; Kensington Park; Oxford; Bentnewydd; Llanwnda; Gainsborough; Rothwell; Ramsbury; Uffculme; Westexe; Northampton; Keighley; and Liverpool; to lie upon the Table.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE.

Petitions from Bristol, for extension to women; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF BUTTER BILL.

Petition from Bournemouth, against; to lie upon the Table.

VACCINATION ACTS.

Petition from Derby, for repeal; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Irish Imports and Exports—Publication of Statistics.

Mr. O'MARA (Kilkenny, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, as President of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, if he will state when the trade statistics of exports and imports for the years 1902 and 1903, already collected by the Department, will be published; and if he will recommend the Department to publish these statistics monthly in future.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The Department attempted to collect these statistics in respect of 1902, but the work of tabulating the information, so far as received, has been attended with very considerable difficulty. The Returns received for that year from Belfast and Cork show the total quantities of each commodity without distinguishing the country or port from or to which the goods were shipped. The Department failed to obtain Returns from Wexford, Drogheda, or Greenore, and the Return for Dublin for the same year contained no particulars of such important items as eggs, butter, and bacon. From other ports the descriptions of the articles mentioned were most unsatisfactory, two or more commodities being frequently bulked together. The manner in which quantities were expressed varied even at the same port; the gross or net weight was seldom stated, the only figures given having reference to the number of barrels, boxes, etc., and it was found impossible to discover what commodities were included, or to reduce the quantities to a common denomination of weight, or to estimate their monetary values. For these reasons it would be useless to give publicity to the statistical information in its present form for 1902, the Returns for which can only be regarded as a foundation on which the attempt to build up a system of accurate statistics can be made. It is hoped that the figures for 1903 will be received by the end of May. So far, the Returns for that year show a distinct improvement over those made for 1902,

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

but the Department is not yet in a position to say whether they will be of such a character as to justify their publication.

Publicans' Licences in Ireland—Case of Mr. J. Boland, of Mallow.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork County, N.E.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will explain why the Excise authorities have refused to issue a licence to Mr. John Boland, Main Street, Mallow, for the sale of beer and spirits, as his application for a new licence was granted by the Recorder of Cork, at the sessions held in Kanturk last February.

(*Answered by Mr. Victor Cavendish.*) It is understood that steps are being taken to quash the Quarter Sessions certificate on the ground that it was granted contrary to the provisions of the Law.

Expenditure for Employment of British Naval Officers to report on the operations of war in the Far East.

SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether any special expenditure has been sanctioned for the employment of naval officers to observe and report upon operations of war in the Far East, and, if so, what is the amount; whether the special expenditure of £7,424 per annum for this purpose is for military officers only; what is the number of military officers, and what is the aggregate amount of pay and allowances sanctioned for the senior military officer so employed.

(*Answered by Mr. Victor Cavendish.*) The Answer to the first part of the Question is in the negative, and to the second in the affirmative. The number of military officers is eleven, and the aggregate amount of pay and allowances sanctioned for the senior military officer is £3,249 15s. per annum.

Rent Aid for Police at Devonport.

MR. KEARLEY (Devonport): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in connection with his recent inquiries as to the inequality of rents paid by the police in the metropolitan police district, and the decision to allow rent aid in consideration of such, he will consider the case of the metropolitan police employed at Devonport, where rentals are higher than in the metropolitan districts, with a view of extending to them the same system of rent aid.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas.*) The point raised by the hon. Member is receiving attention. The conditions under which the police serve at Devonport and other dockyards are very different from those which prevail in London, but the whole of the circumstances shall be considered before any decision is arrived at.

Electricity in Mines—Rules.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can now say when the rules respecting the application of electricity to coal mining will be settled and published.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas.*) The rules suggested by the Committee on this matter have been circulated in the various mining districts, and are now being considered by the coal-owners. I expect shortly to receive their views. Having regard to the number and complexity of the rules I think it is fair to give some time for consideration and for the suggestion of amendments, before formally proposing them in accordance with the provisions of the Coal Mines Regulation Acts. I am, however, using my best efforts to expedite the matter, as I think it will be of advantage to everyone to get a set of rules into force as soon as possible.

Recruiting in Central Africa of Native Labour for the Rand.

SIR BRAMPTON GURDON (Norfolk, N.): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether a labour agent from the Rand is now engaged in recruiting five thousand natives in British Central Africa for employment in the mines of the Transvaal; and whether he has any official information showing that labour is much needed in British Central Africa for railway works and for the new industry of cotton cultivation.

(*Answered by Earl Percy.*) Mr. Knipe, a member of the British Central Africa Administration, now acting on behalf of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, was due in the Protectorate about the middle of February, with authority to recruit up to 5,000 labourers. The arrival in the Transvaal of these recruits will be postponed till August. Our information in regard to the supply of labour for local requirements is contained in my reply to the hon. Member for Liverpool on the 25th ultimo.†

Colonel Betty's Estate, Rathnagrew.

Mr. HAMMOND (Carlow): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state whether Colonel Betty's estate of Rathnagrew, in the barony of Rathvilly and county of Carlow, has now been placed in the Court of Chancery.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The reply is in the negative.

Volunteer Active Service Companies—Officers and Army Uniform.

Mr. SHAW (Stafford): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state what is the meaning of the War Office Order in reference to uniform, that for services in South Africa officers of Volunteers were given honorary rank in the Army, with permission to wear the uniform of their company, corps, or battery, as the case may be, seeing that officers of Volunteer corps who have acquired this distinction and are now again serving with their Volunteer corps, having provided themselves with the uniform of the Line battalion to which they are affiliated, and with which they served in South Africa, have been informed that they have no right to such uniform, but only the right to wear the uniform worn in South Africa, although such uniform, however, being a special service uniform of khaki, is one which officers on home service, and especially those serving with Volunteer battalions, have no opportunity of wearing; and whether, seeing that numbers of Volunteer service officers wore Line uniform when embodied, and took it as a matter of course that the Gazette Order meant the retention of the wearing of full mess and undress uniform, he will say if the question has received that further consideration which was officially promised on 11th August, 1903.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster.*) This matter has received very careful and sympathetic consideration. The Volunteer officers who were attached to Regular battalions in South Africa and granted honorary Army rank were also granted the right and privilege to wear the service uniform in which they fought in South Africa. In this respect they stand on the same footing as the officers of the City Imperial Volunteers and the Imperial Yeomanry, and it is not considered possible to treat them differently from those officers.

Army Discharges—Case of Edward Lynam.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in consequence of debility and bronchial asthma, he is aware that Edward Lynam, formerly of 44th Foot, who served in the Indian Mutiny and was discharged on 30th January, 1877, is unable to obtain employment of any kind; and whether he will direct that some extra pension or allowance be granted to him in consideration of his former services in the Army.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster.*) This man was granted 1s. a day pension, the maximum pension to which he was entitled under the Warrant in force at the time he left the service. As he was not wounded or discharged for disability he is not eligible for any increase of his present pension.

Military Expenditure of Self-Governing Colonies.

Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can give the House the latest information in his possession as to the expenditure on military purposes of the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, and the Colonies of New Zealand, the Cape of Good Hope, and Natal.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxx., 983.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) Expenditure on Military and Naval Purposes of the self-governing Colonies (exclusive of special South African War Expenditure):—

Year ended.	Colony.	Expenditure on Colonial Forces and Works and Armaments.		Contributions to Imperial Garrison and Navy.	
		Military.	Naval.	Military.	Naval.
		£	£	£	£
30th June 1902 . .	Canada . . .	506,454	—	76,132‡	—
30th June 1903 . .	Australia . .	615,946	44,656	—	104,965
31st December 1902 .	New Zealand . .	193,176	—	—	21,452
30th June 1903 . .	Cape of Good Hope	243,638*	—	—	50,000
30th June 1902 . .	Natal . . .	184,100†	—	4,000	Coal valued at 10,398

Outbreak of Plague amongst Natives at Johannesburg.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has any official report as to an outbreak of plague in the coolie location at Johannesburg; and, if so, whether he can state the number of cases and the number of deaths up to 19th March, among the coolies, Kaffirs, and whites.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) The latest telegrams from Lord Milner on this subject are as follows:—20th March. No. 1—"Bubonic plague has broken out in the coolie location here. It is a virulent outbreak, thirty deaths having occurred out of thirty-eight cases within a few days. Though the nature of the disease was only recognised yesterday, steps have been already taken to remove all patients to a special camp to the north of the town. Owing to the fact that the possibility of outbreak has been foreseen for some time, the site of the camp was already chosen and necessary arrangements made, while tents are ready and will be erected immediately. There will be thus no difficulty about isolation and proper treatment of all suspect cases. Outbreak confined to coolie location, which forms part of insanitary area recently expropriated by municipality. Town council is thus in position to clear the location at once, to transfer the coolies to a new site outside the town, and to disinfect the whole space. It has all necessary legislative powers, and administrative arrangements have as far as possible anticipated the need which has arisen. There is thus every reason to hope spread of disease may be promptly checked. Mining area so far quite unaffected." 22nd March. No. 2—"Your telegrams of 21st March, No. 2 and No. 3. Present position of plague is as follows: suspected cases reported, 47 coloured, 6 white; deaths, 40 coloured, 2 white. Outbreak appears to be well in hand, and I do not think it necessary to engage services of Professor Simpson, especially as I have a first rate bacteriologist and excellent medical staff on the spot and the public here have complete confidence in them."

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* Exclusive of all police expenditure.

† Inclusive of reserve and district police.

‡ Inclusive of expenses of Halifax Provisional Garrison.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Royal Irish Fusiliers—Sergeant-Major's Appointment.

Mr. WOOD (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if an appointment has been made to the position of sergeant-major in the Royal Irish Fusiliers, now stationed at Holywood, county Down; whether the sergeant-major appointed holds a first class certificate, and will he state his nationality; and whether, in view of the fact that there is a colour-sergeant in the regiment holding the necessary qualifications for the position, he will explain why he was not appointed.

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Arnold-Forster, Belfast, W.): I am not aware of the case mentioned. The selection of sergeant-majors rests with the local military authorities, with whose discretion the War Office does not interfere, except to secure that, before the warrants are issued, the men selected are properly qualified according to the regulations. No application for a warrant for this man has reached the War Office.

Loss of Submarine A1—Provision for Widows and Orphans.

Sir JOHN LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether the widows and dependents of the officers and men in the submarine A1 will be provided for in the same manner as if their breadwinners had been killed in action.

The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Arthur Lee, Hampshire, Fareham); Yes, Sir. The widows and dependent relatives of the men who lost their lives in the submarine A1 will be provided for in the same manner as if the men had been killed in action; but, as regards the officers, it is understood that neither of them was married. The question, therefore, of awarding pensions on the highest scale does not arise in their case.

Crown Agents' Commissions.

Mr. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, East Toxteth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if the duties of the Crown Agents for the Colonies have recently been extended to the purchasing of all stores and materials for the Transvaal and Orange River Colony; and, if so, will he say whether Lord Milner has approved of the transfer of these duties from the local officials to the Crown Agents in London, and if a commission of 1 per cent. will be charged as usual by the Crown Agents.

*The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. Lyttelton, Warwick and Leamington): Orders for stores and materials required in connection with the public departments of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony are placed with the Crown Agents, as agents in this country for those colonies, except in cases where supplies can be obtained locally. These duties have never been entrusted to the local officials. Their usual commission of 1 per cent. is charged by the Crown Agents.

Mr. BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): Has not this arrangement recently been extended to the two colonies mentioned in the Question.

*Mr. LYTTELTON said he did not quite understand the Question. A percentage of 1 per cent. had been charged since the business had been done there.

India—Lord Curzon's Term of Office.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Perthshire, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether Lord Curzon is shortly coming home; and whether, if his term of office is to be extended, a Bill will be introduced and passed to enable him to come home on leave and retain the Governor-Generalship, or what steps are to be taken to fill up the office which becomes vacant on his leaving India.

*The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. Brodrick Surrey, Guildford): Lord Curzon is about to come to England, and by so doing will vacate his appointment, under the Act 3 and 4, William IV., cap. 85, sect. 79. By the Act 24 and 25 Vict., cap. 67, sect. 50, it is provided that whenever a vacancy occurs in the Governor-Generalship, and when no provisional successor is in India, the senior of the two Governors of Madras and Bombay shall act as Governor-General; and, on Lord Curzon's leaving India this provision will take effect. No successor will be immediately appointed, but it will, of course, be open to His Majesty the King to re-appoint Lord Curzon to the Governor-Generalship at any subsequent date, if he should see fit to do so.

Mr. BUCHANAN: For how long a period is the provisional arrangement to go on.

*Mr. BRODRICK: I believe it is in contemplation that Lord Curzon will leave India in the beginning of May and be in England until September.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee): How long does the law allow temporary provision to be made for.

*Mr. BRODRICK: The law does not lay down any limit, and in point of fact there has been a hiatus between the outgoing and the incoming Governor-General on several occasions.

The Tibetan Mission.

Mr. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, W. R., Elland): I beg to ask whether the report is correct that the political mission to Tibet is about to advance to Gyangtse, and whether resistance from the Tibetans is anticipated.

*Mr. BRODRICK: I am not aware that there is any change in the condition in Tibet. I believe the mission will shortly advance, as it has always been intended it should advance, to Gyangtse to meet the Chinese Amban. Nothing has occurred to prevent the advance, which it was intended it should continue as soon as adequate supplies were available; and I understand these supplies are on the point of becoming available.

Mr. TREVELYAN: Do I understand that resistance is not anticipated?

*Mr. BRODRICK: We know nothing of any change in the position.

Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that some eight miles north of the British camp, 8,000 or 9,000 armed Tibetans are ready to receive the mission?

Mr. FLYNN (Cork Co., N.): Will a further advance be made without consulting the Suzerain Power?

*Mr. BRODRICK: The Suzerain Power has been consulted throughout; it was with the full assent of the Suzerain Power that the first advance was made into Tibet, and it is owing to the obstruction of the Tibetans that the representatives of the Suzerain Power have not yet met the mission.

Mr. FLYNN: The Blue-book does not bear that out.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Who will pay the cost of the mission?

Mr. LOUGH (Islington, W.): Has the Suzerain Power requested the withdrawal of the mission?

*Mr. BRODRICK: No. I do not think it is correct to say that; the Suzerain Power has throughout desired to meet the mission on Tibetan territory. The expenses of the mission will be paid by India.

British Central African Administration.

Mr. BUCHANAN: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the grant in aid to British Central Africa is, in future, to be paid through the Colonial Office and not the Foreign Office; and on what grounds has this change been made by which the Foreign Office ceases to be the Department responsible to Parliament for that Protectorate.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Earl Percy, Kensington, S.): The grant will in future be paid through the Colonial Office. The northward expansion of British colonial possessions in South Africa has emphasised the anomaly and inconvenience involved in the existence, in adjacent territories, of two different systems of law and methods of administration. These will best be harmonised by placing both protectorates in future under the charge of the same Department.

Income-Tax Statistics.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated number of persons paying income-tax on incomes of £700 a year or over.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.): It is not possible to make any trustworthy estimate, either of the total number of persons who pay income-tax or if the number of persons who pay tax on incomes exceeding any given amount.

Belfast Valuation Appeals.

Mr. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether he is aware that the officials of the Valuation Department in Belfast are canvassing appellants for the purpose of inducing them to withdraw their appeals against the revaluation, the reason given by them being that the Commissioner will revise his list on application before the revaluation comes into force; and will he say if it is in accordance with official regulations that the Commissioner should alter the original list in the way his officials suggest; and whether he will take steps to prevent such action on the part of officials in the future.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.): Appeals to Quarter Sessions properly lie against lists of valuation revised by the Commissioner and not against the original list made out by him. Through a misapprehension appeals have in some cases been lodged against the latter and not the former. The Commissioner instructed his officers to call on these appellants, explain to them their error, and inform them that a revised list amending the revaluation lists would be issued and come into operation with the latter, and that an appeal would only lie against the valuation so revised. The object the Commissioner had in view in directing his officers to explain the position of affairs was to save the parties unnecessary expense. His action in this was perfectly legal, and, in addition, would appear to have been very considerate.

Irish National Schools—Teachers' Residue Grant.

Mr. SLOAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state why the capitation allowance due to National school teachers on 31st December last has not yet been paid, and will it be paid before Easter.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. Wyndham, Dover): The question refers to what is known as the residue of the school grant, the amount of which cannot be accurately determined till the end of each financial year. I would refer my hon. friend to the reply to the similar Question put by him on the 19th March, 1903.†

Art and Science Instruction in Ireland—Salaries of Staff.

Mr. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the hon. Member for North Huntingdonshire, as representing the Board of Agriculture, when it is intended to place the staff of the School of Art, College of Science, and Museums in Ireland on the settled terms of wages already granted to the attendants of the English and Scotch Museums, and also granted to the attendants of the National Library in Dublin.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The Department is not yet in a position to give a reply to the Question.

Blaris Burial Ground—Caretaker's House.

Mr. WOOD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been drawn to the action of the Marquess of Hertford in evicting the caretaker and gravedigger of the Blaris Burial Ground from the lodge erected by public subscription some fifty years ago, and since then occupied by the gravedigger at a nominal rent of one shilling per year; and, if so, will he explain why the Local Government Board object to the rural district council of Hillsborough acquiring this property again by purchase for the sum of £55, it having been proposed by the council that the garden attached to the lodge should be added to the burial ground and utilised for burial purposes.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxix., 1232.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The district council has power to negotiate for the purchase of the land attached to the cottage, with a view to the enlargement of the existing burial ground, without the sanction of the Local Government Board. The Board merely pointed out to the council that there is no statutory authority for the acquisition of a cottage for the purpose of providing a residence for a caretaker of the burial ground.

Shaws Bridge Police Barracks, County Down.

Mr. WOOD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he has received a request from the inhabitants of The Milltown, Shaws Bridge, county Down, for the establishment of a police barrack in that district; and, if so, whether, in view of the fact that the population in the district is over 2,000 and the nearest police barrack is five miles distant, steps will be taken to establish police barracks as requested.

Mr. WYNDHAM: No representations to this effect have been received from the inhabitants of the district. But an application was received from the High Sheriff on behalf of the manager of a manufacturing company at Shaws Bridge. The matter is under consideration.

Granard Workhouse Master's Pension.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Local Government Board for Ireland have yet sanctioned the pension of £13 10s. granted by Granard Board of Guardians to Mr. Patrick O'Beirne, late master of Granard Union; whether he is aware that the medical certificates and all other information desired by the Local Government Board has been ordered to be supplied to them by the guardians; and will he, therefore, direct that the matter be now closed by the sanction of this grant.

Mr. WYNDHAM: Yes, Sir; the Order consenting to the payment of the pension will be issued in a day or two.

County Longford Drainage Boards.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the drainage boards of county Longford at present in existence consist largely of men nominated by the land agents of the county, and whether he will direct the attention of the Board of Works to the necessity of having proper notice given of the next election, so that all riparian owners would be able to take part in the election.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The electors of a drainage district are the proprietors of lands within the district. All proprietors have the right to vote at elections o members of the drainage board. The regulations to be observed in respect of such elections are prescribed by the Act of 1863. One of these regulations provides that a meeting of the electors shall be convened after due notice published in the local Press, fourteen days before the date fixed for the election. The Board of Works has no authority to intervene as suggested.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: Cannot the Board of Works see that proper notice is given by the local authorities?

Mr. WYNDHAM: I have no reason to believe that the statutory notice is not given.

Evicted Tenants in County Longford.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is now able to state in how many cases progress has been made by the Estates Commissioners towards the restoration of evicted tenants in county Longford.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The Estates Commissioners have not yet acquired any untenanted land in this county. Until this has been done, it will not be practicable for them to take action in the direction suggested.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: If any public bodies find the land, will the Estates Commissioners take action?

Mr. WYNDHAM was understood to reply that that could not be done until the amending Land Bill had been passed.

Mr. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): Why are the Estates Commissioners not doing something in those cases where farms of evicted tenants are still vacant? I know of several such cases.

Mr. WYNDHAM: Where their attention has been specially directed to any cases, they are doing all they can.

Dean Reeve's Estate, Skibbereen.

Mr. EDWARD BARRY (Cork County, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Con Sullvan of Kilnasha, near Skibbereen, on the Very Rev. Dean Reeve's estate, has been evicted, and is now lodging with the occupant of a labourer's cottage, he having been denied the right of free sale or a plot of ground on which to erect a house; and whether he is aware that with his family this man is now dependent for support on outdoor relief, granted him by the guardians of the Skibbereen Union, and will he direct the Local Government Board to put the Labourers Acts in force in this district in this regard.

Mr. WYNDHAM: I have no information on the first part of the Question. The steps necessary to be taken with a view to the erection of labourers' cottages are well known. The Skibbereen Rural District Council requires no pressure from the Local Government Board in bringing the Labourers Acts into operation, seeing that 226 cottages have already been built in the district.

Royal Irish Constabulary.

Mr. NANNETTI: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the expense of arming the Irish constabulary with new long range magazine rifles and bayonets; and whether, in view of the feeling in Ireland against this outlay, he will consult Irish feeling by not proceeding with this order.

Mr. WYNDHAM: I have already stated that arrangements are being made to re-arm the constabulary with Lee-Enfield cavalry carbines and bayonets at an estimated cost of £4,766. Some misconception appears to exist with respect to the necessity for this change. I may explain, therefore, that it was mainly owing to considerations of the expense that would be involved by retaining the existing pattern rifle and ammunition that the Government decided to re-arm the force. The present weapon is now obsolete and the difficulties in the way of procuring suitable ammunition to enable the force to carry out its annual musketry practice were found to be almost insuperable. To retain the present rifle it would be necessary to make special arrangements at very heavy cost—if, indeed, such arrangements were practicable—for replenishing deficiencies in stocks of the arm and ammunition. The change decided upon is consequently in the interests of the general taxpayer.

Mr. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): Will the right hon. Gentleman, instead of spending this extra money on arming the police, reserve it for the purpose of Irish drainage?

Mr. WYNDHAM: It is an economy.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of disarming the police?

Irish Police and the Press.

Mr. DUFFY (Galway, S.): I wish to ask the Chief Secretary a Question of which I have given him private notice, viz., whether at a special Court now being held at Athenry to investigate a charge of taking arms, made against five respectable men, application for the admission of the Press was refused by the police, although the Resident Magistrate (Mr. Gardiner) said he had no objection to the presence of reporters. Will the right hon. Gentleman direct that the Press shall be admitted to this Court and to similar Courts in the future?

Mr. WYNDHAM said he had only received notice of the Question since he entered the House. He had telegraphed an inquiry on the subject and must ask that the Question be postponed.

MR. ROCHE (Galway, E.): Are not such incidents continually occurring in Ireland?

*MR. SPEAKER: Notice had better be given in the usual way of further Questions.

Belfast Town Postmen—Delivery Arrangements.

MR. SLOAN: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he can state under what circumstances the practice of allowing town postmen, in order of seniority, to select the district in which they will deliver has been discontinued at Belfast; whether he is aware that as a result of the revision recently sanctioned for Belfast, men who have been delivering in certain districts for many years have been removed to districts in other parts of the city; and, seeing that this will entail inconvenience to the public, to the postmen and their families, as it will be necessary for them to remove their homes to the new districts to which they have been transferred, whether he will state what steps he proposes to take.

*THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, Westhoughton): It has been the practice at Belfast, when a postman's walk becomes vacant, to allot it to the senior applicant if he is suitable in all respects, and any applications from the postmen for the new duties created under the recent revision would be duly considered on their merits. Under that revision it was necessary to alter the delivery routes of sixty-four out of 170 postmen, but forty-three of these men finish their deliveries nearer their homes than previously. The public have benefited by the alterations, and the postmaster has received no complaints from any of the postmen of inconvenience such as that described by the hon. Member.

Skibbereen Post Office.

MR. EDWARD BARRY: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether a contract has been entered into to build a new post office in Skibbereen; whether the contractor has been declared; and, if so, when is the work likely to be commenced.

*LORD STANLEY: A contractor for building a new post office at Skibbereen has been declared, and the work has already been commenced.

Redistribution of Seats.

*MR. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if it is the intention of the Government to deal with the question of the redistribution of seats during the present Parliament.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I have no intention of inquiring into the subject of redistribution of seats or dealing with it in the course of the present session.

*MR. D. A. THOMAS: Is it not in the recollection of the right hon. Gentleman that two years ago he expressed a confident hope, in terms practically amounting to a promise, that he would be able to deal with this question in the present Parliament?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir, I made no promise.

Government Licensing Bill.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he has decided to introduce the promised Government Licensing Bill before or after Easter.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: After Easter.

Outdoor Relief (Friendly Societies) Bill.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY (Somersetshire, S.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Government will undertake to introduce into the House of Lords this session a Bill similar to the Outdoor Relief (Friendly Societies) Bill, which has been twice rejected in the House of Lords when in charge of an unofficial Member of that House.

SIR WILLIAM TOMLINSON (Preston): Is it not the case that the hon.

Gentleman has been consistently opposing a Bill with the same object.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I think the whole House will admit that this question should be dealt with. There is a Bill similar in its terms to the Bill brought in last year by the hon. Gentleman. The Bill last year passed this House without opposition. I should hope the House will follow the same course this session as last. The Government entirely approve the Bill, and will do all they can to further its progress.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered my Question. I asked whether the Government would introduce the Bill in the Lords as a Government Bill.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I answered this Question by implication. The simplest and best course would be to adopt the same plan as last session. When it has passed this House it will go to the other House with greater authority, and the Government will do their best to help it through.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: Am I to understand that the Government absolutely refuse to introduce it into the Lords as a Government measure.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir. I have stated what I think is the best course, and if the hon. Member will withdraw his opposition in this House that course will be facilitated.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: The right hon. Gentleman is quite aware that the opposition is due to the dirty trick played on me.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! That is not a proper expression to use of the action of another hon. member.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: Of course, Sir, I at once withdraw it.

POLICE (SUPERANNUATION) BILL.

[Second Reading].

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) was glad that this Bill had been brought forward at an hour at which it could be discussed. To understand it properly it was necessary to bear in mind the provisions of the Act of 1890. Under that Act the police in England and Wales received better treatment with regard to pensions than any other class of Civil servant. A policeman who becomes incapacitated, and has not served for fifteen years, gets a gratuity on a medical certificate, and after fifteen years service, on a medical certificate of infirmity of mind or body, he gets a pension. After twenty-five years, without any medical certificate at all, he becomes entitled under that Act to retire on a pension. Two pension scales are laid down by the Act—a maximum scale, which gives a pension equal to two-thirds of the officer's pay, after twenty-six years service, and a minimum scale, which gives a pension equal to two-thirds pay after thirty-five years service. The reason for having two scales was that in large cities and towns the labours of the police were more irksome than in country places. Parliament trusted the local authorities to give effect to that principle. Again, the local police authorities were empowered to fix an age for retirement, which was not to be below fifty, or over fifty-five, the object being to meet the varying conditions of service. But how had the Act worked out in practice? The police possessed a very powerful organisation, which had so acted upon the local authorities that he believed in every case the maximum scale had been adopted, whilst no age limit for retiring was fixed, so that every policeman was entitled to retire after twenty-six years service. A policeman was appointed probably at the age of nineteen or twenty, and retired in full manhood, at forty-six and forty-seven years of age. In Scotland it was different. A man did not become entitled to his full two-thirds pay pension until he had completed thirty-four years service, and had reached the age of fifty-five, or, in the case of rank above a sergeant, sixty. Recently Scottish policemen complained that they did not enjoy the superior conditions obtaining in England, and a Bill was brought in to put them on an equal footing. The Bill was remitted to a Select Committee but the local authorities strongly pressed on the Committee the desirability of leaving them no discretion in these matters, as they feared that the pressure they would be subjected to from police organisations would result in the maximum practically becoming the minimum, as had proved the case in England.

There was another aspect of this question which should not be lost sight of, and that was the increasing burden on the local rates. The pensions were paid out of a permanent fund, made up of from three sources, two of which were practically stationary—the Exchequer grant, the local fund contributed to by fines appropriated by Statute for the purpose—and the contributions of the men. The latter was a comparatively small item, for, although the pensions paid in 1902 amounted to £433,752, the contributions of the police, representing 2½ per cent. of their wages, totalled only £64,681, and, even if those contributions should in future years aggregate a larger sum, the burden on the fund would be proportionately heavier. The deficiency which had to be made up out of local rates in 1901 was £78,909, increasing in 1902 to £93,607 or 18 per cent. Seeing that the Act had only been in operation fourteen years, and that, according to actual calculations, it will take about thirty years to reach the high-water mark of expenditure, it was apparent that the burden on local rates would be considerably heavier. The question was a serious one. The local authorities were themselves to blame, for they had failed to carry out the intentions of Parliament, and were allowing policemen to retire at forty-six or forty-seven years of age, on a full pension. Such a state of affairs was never contemplated by Parliament. The ratepayers were overburdened with rates for police pensions in order that men might retire at forty-six years of age in the enjoyment of a pension for life equal to two-thirds of their salaries. It was not the fault of Parliament, as the Act gave the local authorities power to discriminate; the local police authorities alone were to blame for having allowed themselves to be pressed in the matter. These men, having obtained their pensions, either took a licensed house or competed in the labour market with the men who had to pay the rates out of which the pensions were provided.

If the principle of the Bill were accepted, every other pensioner in the State would quote it as a precedent, and claim the same rights as were accorded to policemen. The real remedy lay in the hands of the local authorities without any interference from Parliament. The existing schemes would have to be observed with regard to the men who engaged under them, but new scales could be adopted to take effect forthwith, and so the difficulty would be got over. The Bill would enable local authorities, on the plea that it was an economy to the rates, to keep men on, giving them half-pay in addition to their pensions, instead of bringing in fresh men. The proposal was conceived simply in the interests of the superior officers of the force who desired to continue in the service at increased pay. The men who continued in the service might begin at half-pay, but it would not be long before the contention was put forward that the pensions were deferred pay and ought to be paid at once, and that if the men did the work they ought to receive the proper wage, in addition to their pensions. One local authority would be pressed to give half-pay, another two-thirds, and another the full wage, and then all local authorities would be driven to adopt the same course. Organisations of every kind were formed in this country to promote their own interests, and attempts were made to rush Bills of this kind, and this was just the sort of Bill he had had his eye on from the first. He submitted that the Bill ought to be remitted to a Select Committee in order that the circumstances of the whole country might be ascertained, with reference both to the present as well as to the probable future cost of the police. If the Government would agree to that course the Bill would have served a useful purpose, because it would enable local authorities to realise their exact position.

Sir JOHN DORINGTON (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) said that so far from increasing the liabilities of county councils and local authorities, the Bill would have a tendency to diminish them, because men who now took their pensions because they feared the possibility of losing them if they continued in the service, would not, if the Bill were passed, have the occasion for leaving. Under the provisions of this Bill they would be able to continue in the service without running any of the risks of forfeiture which were contained in the present Police Act, and the conditions of forfeiture were not to apply after a man became entitled to a pension if he decided to continue in the service. The suggestion of the hon. Member for Mid Lanark with regard to men being paid their pensions and half-pay seemed to be a little bit absurd. A man would not serve unless he got his proper pay, which was much in excess of his pension.

Mr. CALDWELL said his point was that, according to the arrangements, a policeman was to have his pension and in addition half-pay, which, together, would be more than his ordinary pay.

Sir JOHN DORINGTON said this was not in the Bill at all, and it was hardly likely that any local authority would take such a course, because, after forty-eight years of age, a policeman was not worth as much as a younger man except in the upper ranks. Formerly they could not pension constables until a much greater age, and he was very much surprised, as a county administrator, to find how considerable was the number of men who were practically cripples and past work who, as soon as the Police Act of 1890 was passed, very properly came on to the pension list. He was in favour of the Bill, under which there would only be forfeiture of pension when a policeman committed a criminal offence, or an offence more or less criminal, and the ordinary petty offences against discipline would not entail the forfeiture of pensions.

Sir ROBERT REID (Dumfries Burghs) thought some explanation of this Bill ought to be given by the Government; as for the Bill being in the direction of economy he did not think that was so. If a constable gave further service after his pension was fixed under this Bill, he would be able to take his full pension and no deduction would be made from it as was the case at the present time. There appeared to be little snares in this Bill which ought to have some explanation from the Government.

Mr. SPEAR (Devonshire, Tavistock) desired very cordially to support the Bill. He had been struck many times with the large number of men leaving the police force at an age when they were never better fitted for service to the country, and he was prepared to say that many of those men would prefer to remain in the force were it not that, having served the number of years which entitled them to a pension, they felt the risks of remaining in the force, subject to the accidents which might affect their pension, were too great and they consequently retired. He would like to put before the Government the desirability of amending the Bill by raising the number of years a policeman had to serve. It would be unfair to attempt that with reference to the present members of the force, because they entered the service upon the understanding that after twenty-five years they would be entitled to a pension. But in the case of all recruits he suggested that the number of years service entitling a man to a pension should be raised by at least five years. He would be the last to suggest anything likely to interfere with the character or efficiency of the police force, of which he felt proud. There was no lack, however, of recruits—in fact, the whole country-side was cleared of its best men, because of the desire to enter the force. He was constantly asked to recommend men from the country. If the conditions of increased service were exacted from all recruits it would not prevent a sufficient number being forthcoming to maintain the efficiency of the force. Hard as it was to lose the flower of their manhood in the country for the police force a condition should not exist which withdrew from the soil men to a greater extent than was necessary for the maintenance of the efficiency of the police force. Another grievance felt by the people was that after a police constable retired from the force he often felt he must continue to work, and be engaged in business or applied for a situation in competition with other men who had had to remain in the country districts all their lives. That was unfair competition, and from that point of view also he thought the age should be raised with a view to restricting the number of men leaving the force. What he had suggested might, moreover, militate against the burden of the pension fund which was becoming very serious. He should support the Bill because he thought it would do great good. It would retain in the force men who, by experience, were better able to carry out their duties than they had been at any period of their lives. He would go further and raise the age limit of all recruits entering the force. Possibly such a step would not interfere with the efficiency of the force, and it would save the country from an unjust drain upon the healthy manhood which was so much required in every part of business life and especially in argicultural districts.

*THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. COCHRANE, Ayrshire, N.), said he entirely agreed with the statement made by the hon. Member for Tavistock as to what the effect of this Bill would prove to be. He had listened with great interest to the statement of the hon. Member for Mid Lanark, and he could not see that he had any particular quarrel with his general statement. He had described the Act of 1890 with considerable accuracy, but as far as he could gather he did not deal at all with the Bill now before the House except incidentally. The hon. Member had pointed out what was the difference in Scotland with regard to pensions, and he had shown that a pension could not be earned in Scotland except by a medical certificate. The hon. Member took considerable credit for being the only Scotch Member who resisted the attempts being made to place the Scotch police force on the same footing as the English. The result was that the Scotch police force who were equally deserving had to suffer, because instead of getting their pensions automatically after twenty-five years service they must obtain a medical certificate, or serve until they were fifty-five years of age. He did not think the Scottish police owed any debt of gratitude to the hon. Member for Mid Lanark for his action in this matter. The police pension funds had been growing every year, and the amount was increasing at such a rate that it became a matter for serious consideration. The question was only indirectly dealt with in this Bill. He shared with the hon. Member his desire for reasonable economy upon this question. With regard to the proposals made by West Sussex, it did not come under this Bill, but it was a scheme which had been carried out at Liverpool where they had fuller powers. Under the West Sussex scheme the proposals were not on all fours with the proposals under this Bill. Under the Act of 1890 a police constable had the right to obtain his pension after twenty-five years service. After that he might make any other arrangement he liked and there was nothing in this Bill that would affect that right.

SIR ROBERT REID said that a constable coming from Plymouth might go over to Dover and he would take his pension with him, but the Plymouth people might suspend his pension so long as he held office there. That was the law at the present time, but under the present Bill when a constable went from Plymouth to Dover he would not be liable to any withdrawal or deduction in regard to his pension.

*MR. COCHRANE said that in the case of a police constable having taken his pension after twenty-five years service and joining another Police Force it fell to the Watch Committee of that Force to make what bargain they liked. On this point the Bill did not affect the existing law as regards his relations with the pensioning authority.

SIR ROBERT REID said his point was that under the existing law there was power in regard to the pension for past services which he had earned under the law of 1890, for the local authority or the Watch Committee could reduce him if he got another appointment, but this Bill did away with that power.

*Mr. COCHRANE said the police pensions were creating a burden, and a very serious burden, upon the rates. The annual contribution from Imperial sources to counties and boroughs was £150,000 per annum. In addition to that 2½ per cent. was taken off the pay of the policemen, and the rest was made up from the rates. The total expenditure in 1902 in England and Wales was £434,737. There was an annual excess of expenditure over income of £93,627. Any suggestion that could be made which would lessen this growing burden was worthy of the consideration of the House. He thought he could assure the House that this Bill, in a small way, would produce that result. If they added to the expenditure of the counties and boroughs in England and Wales the London expenditure, amounting to £406,448, the annual deficiency was £170,000. That showed this was a very serious matter. The statutory scale for pensions under the law as it at present stood was as follows: (*a*) For fifteen years completed (but less than twenty-one) with a medical certificate, not more than one-fiftieth, and not less than one-sixtieth of his annual pay for each year of approved service; (*b*) for twenty-one years completed (but less than twenty-five) with a medical certificate, not more than twenty-fiftieths and not less than twenty-sixtieths for each year up to twenty, and not more than two-fiftieths, and not less than two-sixtieths for each year above twenty; and (*c*) for twenty-five years and upwards, without any medical certificate, not more than thirty-one-fiftieths and not less than thirty-sixtieths, and not more than three-fiftieths, and not less than one-sixtieth for each year above twenty-five, the maximum not to be exceed two-thirds. The pension was, of course, calculated on his pay at the time of retirement.

What were the objects aimed at by the Bill now before the House? In the first place it was a permissive Bill. The police authority might, or might not, take advantage of its provisions. Did the hon. Member object to that? It surely was a right thing that a police authority, if they wished to retain the services of a good police constable, who was in good health, and physically capable, should be able to hold out some inducement which would, at the same time, have the effect of lessening the burden on the rates. But the policemen at present felt insecurity of tenure. A man who had earned his pension was afraid that if he committed some small offence in respect of discipline he might be dismissed *ipso facto* and lose the pension he had earned. That was a bar which prevented many excellent men continuing in the service. What the Government hoped was that arrangements would be made by the police authority to guarantee that a man, after twenty-five years service, should, if he continued in the service, receive his pension without having it reduced for mere breaches of discipline. He would only lose the right to it for the serious offences mentioned in Section 8 of the Act of 1890, namely, (*a*) conviction of a criminal offence and sentence to penal servitude, or more than three months hard labour, or more than twelve months imprisonment without hard labour; (*b*) association with thieves or reputed thieves; (*c*) refusing to assist police in detecting crime, apprehending criminals, and suppressing disturbances; (*d*) carrying on illegal occupation, or occupation in which improper use is made of the man's former position as a police officer. But if he had not committed any of these offences his right to pension should be, so to say, earmarked so that it could not be taken away from him. That would give him security of tenure which would be of the greatest value. This would result, he hoped, in keeping a good many men in the service. These proposals had been considered by many of those who were most competent to give advice on the subject. The police authorities held a conference in 1898, and it was largely on the experience they had brought to bear on the subject, and the recommendations they offered, that this Bill was drafted. They urged the Secretary of State—

> "To provide that, if a constable remains in a force after the date upon which he becomes

entitled to a pension, such constable shall not be liable to forfeit such pension, or to have it reduced except for some offence mentioned in Section 8 of the Act of 1890."

The Bill, if carried, would permit the police authorities to induce specially selected men to continue in the service. Under Section 10 of the Act of 1890 they were still liable to dismissal for breach of discipline, but under Section 8 they could only lose their pension for serious offences. In his opinion the Bill would add considerably to the efficiency of the force, and it would reduce the rates, because more men would continue to serve after twenty-six years. A man who had gained all that experience was, for certain purposes, exceedingly valuable, but he would not during the time of his additional service be earning further pension. If a man was allowed to take his pension and go, it would be necessary to engage a fresh constable, and for three or four years while gaining experience he was practically of little use in the force. The result of the present proposal would be advantageous in two ways. It would be possible to retain a man in the service without increasing his pension, and it would not be necessary to employ a young and inexperienced constable. He hoped the House would agree to the Second Reading of the Bill. If the details required adjustment, though he did not think that was the case, that could be done in the Committee on Trade to which he hoped the Bill would be sent.

*Mr. LOUGH (Islington, W.) said this was an example of a class of Bill of which there had already been two or three, and which were wrong in principle. Of course it was right that the police of the country should be, to some extent, under the Home Office, as it was necessary that the Home Office should be responsible for their efficiency. But it was not necessary that the Home Secretary should prescribe every detail as to years of service or systems of pension and other similar matters. Such arrangements, when they were applied indifferently to all districts tended towards extravagance. He thought a certain latitude might be allowed to local authorities to prepare schemes, and to provide themselves with an economical police force—greater latitude than was permitted under the Acts now in force. It was the sense of the oppressive burden that fell on localities which had probably induced the Government to bring forward this Bill. It would effect a small economy. It would however, only go a short way in that direction. He thought the House should consider in connection with the Acts of 1890 and 1893 whether this subject should be nibbled at, and whether it would not be better to deal with it in a comprehensive piece of legislation. There would be no great difficulty in doing this. No one would suggest that the men now in the force should be deprived of anything, but new men were constantly being brought in, and he thought a Bill could be passed to give local authorities power to prepare schemes for themselves which would conduce to economy. The Chief Secretary for Ireland had carried out a scheme by which a great economy was being effected in connection with the Irish police. The right hon. Gentleman had arranged for a system of progressive reductions in recruiting, which, in five or six years, would amount to no less than £250,000. That had been done without the slightest injustice to a single man in the force. He had put down a blocking Motion with respect to this Bill, but he would not move it if he received from the hon. Member a promise that the suggestion he had made would be considered.

*Mr. COCHRANE indicated dissent.

*Mr. LOUGH said the hon. Member shook his head. He hoped, however, the hon. Member would give some attention to his Amendment when the next stage was reached. A strong feeling of injustice was felt by the members of the police force in London because parts of their pay and emoluments came under heads which prevented them counting for pension. It seemed to him to be a mean thing for the authorities to give a fixed and permanent increase of pay in a form which would be open to this objection. It had created a great deal of discontent and considerable litigation in the administration of the police law in many parts of the country. The case of an officer, who had served in the House of Lords for several years, and who had received during all that period an increase of 7s. a week in pay, had been the subject of litigation. This officer found, when he came to retire, that this substantial part of his emoluments did not count for pension. The final decision was against him, but in the Appeal Court, as well as in the lower Court, the judges expressed great sympathy with his difficulties. Surely this was a very questionable system. He hoped the hon. Gentleman would consider this point fairly. He was not against the principle of the Bill, nor did he think anybody was against it, as all should be willing to adopt any expedient which would promote economy. He thought it would be far better for the Government to withdraw this Bill and bring in a broader measure dealing with the whole question. The hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill had admitted that there were defects in it. He thought the House ought to be indebted to his hon. and learned friend the Member for Dumfries for showing that no provision was made for the case of a man who had qualified for a pension and then served for a single year, but after that removed into a new district. These defects would affect materially the economic working of the measure if passed into law.

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said he agreed with his hon. friend in his criticism that there was something in the mode of calculating service for pension which was not what it ought to be. But that was not a reason for opposing the Bill altogether. The same remark applied to the criticism of the late Attorney-General. The case for the Bill was a very simple one. Local authorities, he knew, desired, as a matter of economy, to retain the services of constables whose training had been paid for by them, but who took their pension as soon as it was due, because they believed that their pension might be imperilled, by staying on, if they committed a small offence. He thought the Bill would tend to economy on the part of the local authorities and would remedy an injustice.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) said that he had had a good deal to do with the passing of the Bill of 1890, which he knew had imposed a burden on the ratepayers. But that Bill had, nevertheless, been very beneficial to the public, because it had induced a very improved class of recruits to come into the police service, especially in London. The hon. Member opposite asked for whose benefit the present Bill had been conceived? It was conceived in the interests of the police force. The hon. Gentleman stated that many men, entitled to their pension under the Act of 1890 took it because they thought they might be deprived of it for a very small offence. But, under the first section of the Act of 1890, it was provided that a constable was not to be pensioned unless he had served twenty-five years; although the minimum age had been left optional to be fixed by the local authority. Very few local authorities had adopted a minimum age, because otherwise they could not attract good and capable men into the service. The point raised as to service in another police force was worthy of consideration, but it would apply in very few cases indeed, because local authorities would be very chary of engaging men who had earned a pension in another force, for these men would naturally be of considerable age, except in very exceptional circumstances. The case of the late chief constable of the police force of Liverpool being engaged as Chief Commissioner of the City Police was quite exceptional, and did not come within the purview of the Bill before the House, which dealt with the police force as a whole. It was unquestionable that many men who had done street duty for twenty-five or twenty-six years were unfit to continue that duty, but there were many employments in the police to which they might be put; and it was a very great pity indeed that, under the provisions of the Act of 1890, the services of such men, of considerable ability, should be lost to the public the moment they were entitled to draw their pensions. He was quite sure that this Bill, if passed, would conduce to economy and to the interest of the public; and that it would be welcomed by the police themselves. It was not necessary in this Bill to deal with the question of allowances; but he might say that there were many allowances in the police force which were purely temporary, such as lodging allowances, or allowances for duty at the Houses of Parliament.

Mr. LOUGH said he excluded all these, and only dealt with permanent allowances.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT said that he misunderstood the hon. Gentleman. There would be considerable difficulty in including all allowances in pension rates. He had great pleasure in supporting the Second Reading of the Bill, and he thanked the Government for having introduced it.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee) said he had two things to say about this Bill. It was rather extraordinary that they should be discussing such a measure at all at this time. They were approaching the end of the first part of the Parliamentary session, when the public business was supposed to be of the most valuable character. Mr. Gladstone used to say that of all the time of the House of Commons, the early part of the session was the most valuable, and should be devoted to the most important public business. At this period the Government usually called upon them to discuss the most important part of their legislative programme. He did not know whether this Bill was the Government's most important measure, but it belonged to the class of Departmental Bills which were usually dealt with at the close and not at the beginning of the session. Did the Government mean by bringing forward this Bill that they had no other important business, or did it mark the close of the session or the close of this Parliament? [Cries of "Oh, oh!"; and ironical Opposition cheers.] He wanted to know what it meant, and if hon. Gentlemen opposite who sneered at his remark could throw any light on the question, they on that side would be greatly obliged to them. This was one of a class of Bills which were rapidly causing suspicion in the minds of the working people of this country. It was a Bill to give pensions to a particular class, and he was bound to make his protest against it. At the last election he told his constituents that he would not assent to any Bill giving new pensions without having the whole subject of pensions raised. The House ought not to be asked to continue to increase pensions to a small and limited class when the great question of general pensions had not been disposed of. They never heard of old-age pensions now; but they did hear of pensions to small and limited classes of the population. He was unwilling to assent to this Bill until the House had before it what the whole burden of pensions was to be. Would the hon. Member in charge of the Bill tell them what was the total amount that would fall on the public funds for police pensions?

*Mr. COCHRANE: This Bill deals only with England and Wales.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON said yes, but it dealt with public expenditure. It was, he continued, relevant to ask what was the whole cost of pensions given in the public service? Could any Gentleman on the Treasury Bench say how many millions the country had to pay? That question was relevant because every pension given to a policeman or any other official was a burden on the class who had been fooled for years with old-age pension schemes. Was the country paying £12,000,000 in pensions? It was difficult to discover the exact amount, but he hoped that some member of the Government would tell them before this Bill was passed.

*Mr. COCHRANE: I shall be happy to obtain the information the hon. Gentleman asks for.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: I am extremely obliged to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) said that the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman indicated a view which was rapidly increasing in political circles generally, namely, that the worst way to obtain old-age pensions for all was to give pensions to the few. The reception now given to the Bill was accordingly not as great as that given to it a few years ago. There were several reasons for that. The hon. Member for the Central Division of Sheffield was keenly interested in the measure before the House, and he indicated that the object of the Bill was to remove a genuine grievance under which the police force of the country suffered, and the hon. Member particularised that grievance by describing it as insecurity of tenure. The young men in the police force were, however, against this Bill; and the old men were not particularly enthusiastic in favour of it. The insecurity of tenure of which the police justly complained was not due to causes which the Bill hoped to remove, but was due to the fact that a civilian force, who should be controlled by men of judicial minds, was being rapidly militarised and governed on bureaucratic lines. If hon. Members doubted his word, let them ask a policeman. The debate also indicated a great diversity of view as to what were the conditions of service which made the police force with its relatively good pay and pension not so popular as it ought to be. The men believed that the Bill would lead to favouritism for the higher officers. The hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Central Sheffield indicated that in his speech. The Bill catered more for the men from subdivisional inspectors upwards than from sub-divisional inspectors downwards. The man who ought to be helped was the man in the street who could never hope to get beyond the rank of sergeant. He had nothing but unqualified praise for the way in which the police did their work. He testified to the full as to their efficiency, zeal, and capacity. With all its defects it was the best police force in the world; but if the hon. and gallant Gentleman had his way he would spoil it. The hon. and gallant Gentleman wanted to militarise everything and everybody.

The Bill would enable men to leave the force at the end of twenty-five years service. Why? Not because they were afraid, if they remained on, that they might commit some serious act of insubordination which would forfeit their pension. The Bill would enable men to continue after twenty-five years without any danger of their pension being forfeited, except by a criminal act; but the men would not remain unless the entire system of police administration were altered. Take the case of a police constable who was a teetotaller and who had a superior officer who was not; or a constable who was against betting and a superior officer who betted. This Bill would enable such a man after twenty-five years of loyal and honest service to be entitled to his pension and remain in the force for another three or four years. That was the only good point in the Bill. Without it a brutal or vindictive superior might report a man with twenty-four years and eleven months service for some trivial cause and thereby deprive him of the pension to which he had partly contributed. The Bill would protect efficient and honest policeman from harsh treatment. The ideal system of treating the police force would be to adopt the Scottish system. He himself thought that the country had too many police. Ireland was now paying £40,000 less for police than it did a few years ago, which showed that the protests of the Irish Members were justified. In London, in his opinion, there were 2,000 more police than were required. He would apply the wages of that surplus number to increasing the pay of the men up to the rank of sergeant. The Bill did not now get the sympathetic reception it received a few years ago, because ex-inspectors and men of higher rank who were on pension were the heads of huge blackmailing societies, the nauseous details of the proceedings of which were to be seen in the newspapers. These men placed at the disposal of these semi-criminal agencies an experience which ought not to be allowed to be used with a State pension at its back; and he intended in Committee to move an Amendment to prevent it.

*MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) deprecated the attack on the police which had been made by the hon. Member for Battersea.

MR. JOHN BURNS asked the indulgence of the House while he resented the insinuation that he had attacked the police. He had stated that he wished the police to have a better *status* and better pay.

*MR. CLAUDE HAY said the only possible inference that could have been drawn from the remarks of the hon. Member for Battersea was that the policeman did not keep his eyes open as he should do with regard to publicans and bookmakers, that is to say, do his duty, because he did not receive £2 per week. He desired to place it on record that that was not the view taken by Members sitting on the Unionist side of the House. So far as the opposite side was concerned, he believed that the statement of the hon. Member was true that the police did not receive the sympathy and consideration on this occasion that they did five years ago, but it was certainly not the case on the Government side of the House. He thought it was only common justice that permanent special service should count for service when the question of pension came to be considered, but he did not believe any good would be done for the public by decreasing the number of the police now in the force. In fact, he thought if such a decrease was made the public service would suffer. He was also of opinion that service after twenty-five years service should count for pension.

MR. HELME (Lancashire, Lancaster) said he desired to support the principle of this Bill, because it served the public interest in two respects. It would secure the possibility of the retention in the force of a number of the men of experience who were at present somewhat inclined to retire directly their term of service was sufficient to enable them to claim a pension. He had served on Standing Joint Committees in the North, and had noticed the considerable number of applications for pension. If they passed this Bill they would relieve the public purse of a large amount of money which was now paid to men who retired from the force at forty-five or forty-six years of age, and who took their pension at the earliest possible moment rather than remain in the force and take the risk of losing that which they had fairly earned. He could not see why it should be impossible for the Standing Joint Committee to consider further years of service rendered by constables when dealing with the question of pension. It ought to be optional for the Standing Joint Committee to consider that when considering the pension that the constable should take.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE (Sussex, Horsham) said the question of the retirement of men in the prime of health and who were perfectly able to carry on their duties as police constables was not so much a matter for the police themselves as for those who had to secure the efficiency of the force. The subject had been before Committees and county councils. Members of the force who had served twenty-five years often thought it better to take the pensions to which they were entitled and go away, rather than run the risk of forfeiting their pensions. They could not be blamed for that. At the present time they could not remain in the force and make the pension secure. The object of the Bill was to enable them to make the pension secure, and, at the same time, go on in the service if they desired to do so. He believed the Bill would diminish the police charges, and that none of the difficulties, dangers, and extravagancies which hon. Members with an imperfect knowledge of the subject had indicated, were in the least likely to follow in its train.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.

*MR. AINSWORTH (Argyllshire) was understood to suggest that the period of service necessary to qualify for a pension should be lengthened, and that the same rule should apply all over [the Kingdom, and the period for service in Scotland, which was now longer than in England, be made the same.

WAYS AND MEANS (22 MARCH).

Resolutions reported.

"That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904, the sum of £4,256,177 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

"That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1905, the sum of £39,571,200 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

Resolutions agreed to. Bill ordered to be brought in by the Chairman of Ways and Means, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Victor Cavendish.

CONSOLIDATION FUND (No. 1) BILL.

"To apply certain sums out of the Consolidated Fund to the service of the years ending on the 31st day of March, 1904 and 1905," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time to-morrow.

TELEGRAPH [MONEY.]

Resolution reported.

"That it is expedient to authorise the issue, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any sums not exceeding in the whole £3,000,000 for the purpose of the Telegraph Acts, 1863 to 1899, and to apply the provisions of the Telegraph Act, 1892, to the raising of such sums."

MR. O'MARA (Kilkenny, S.) took objection not to this particular proposal in itself, but to the general principle embodied in these Bills. The system of repaying money by annuities was altogether defective. Funds supplied for telephone purposes ought to be repaid out of the revenue of the year. It would doubtless be said that this was for capital expenditure from which the country would receive benefits for many years to come, but he contended that to pledge the credit of the country and incur future liabilities to so large an extent was not sound finance, and he would protest against the practice on every possible occasion. A great objection to the system was that once the Government were authorised to spend the money, there was no further opportunity of discussing the matter. He did not consider that past expenditure on the telephone service had yielded the advantages to the public that might have been expected from it; the Post Office had not afforded all the facilities they might have done, but if the noble Lord would give an assurance that the money would be spent economically and for the public benefit, he would not further oppose the present proposal.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) asked whether, if this money were voted, a considerable development of the telephone service in Ireland might be expected. There was a considerable demand for increased telephonic facilities amongst business people in various parts of the country, and it was only fair that that demand should be considered. If the noble Lord undertook to give his attention to Ireland's requirements in the matter, he would raise no objection to the money being voted. Unless they got some undertaking that Ireland would get a fair share of this money he did not think they ought to consent to it. The House had been shovelling about money for wars and other purposes which were perfectly useless, but this was a proposition to vote a certain amount of money for something that would be a benefit to the commercial community and business people generally, and he hoped the noble Lord would be able to say that Ireland would share to some extent in the development of this system.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.) thought it was very desirable to have an extension of the telephone system in Ireland, but if they were going to charge London prices it would be very little use indeed. In extending the service from Dublin to Sligo there should be facilities given in all the towns *en route* so as to place business premises in direct telephonic communication with the city of Dublin.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.) said that yesterday the noble Lord was asked certain Questions which at that time he was obviously unable to deal with. Those Questions were very important, and any further information he was able to give them now in regard to them would be welcomed by the country. He understood that this was only a preliminary stage of this Bill, and that there would be a further opportunity of considering this matter. There were, however, two points upon which the noble Lord might give them information, first with regard to the finance of the Post Office telephones at the present time. The noble Lord had already given them some interesting figures about the number of telephone messages in the London service but he had not referred to the capital sunk in London. He mentioned the whole capital as being £4,250,000 for the whole country, but he did not say how the revenues were coming in from the rest of the country. They were now being asked for £3,000,000 more and it had been hinted that even a larger sum would be required for the purchase of the National Telephone Company's undertaking. The amount was getting very large indeed. If some more information could be given as to the revenue which the Post Office was deriving generally from the great expenditure which had been incurred, it would be very satisfactory to the House. There was another point mentioned yesterday, and it was that a promise should be given by the Government that this expenditure should be separated from the telegraph and that separate accounts should be presented. This appeared on the Paper as a Telegraph Money Bill, but it was not for the telegraph system at all but for the telephone system. There was a continual loss with regard to the investments of the country in telegraphs, but it was said to be a different story in regard to telephones. He hoped the noble Lord would be able to promise that the Post Office, after consideration, would see its way to separate the two accounts and give them information as to how the development of the telephone system was likely to repay this House for the great expenditure incurred. The next point he wished to raise was in reference to the facilities which would be given to the House to consider any arrangement with the National Telephone Company. This was a point which was spoken about yesterday. He knew it was not an easy matter to arrange satisfactorily because negotiations with the company must be carried on between the Post Office authorities and the company, and an agreement must be put forward. They did not want the question finally settled without the House having an opportunity of considering it fully and adequately. He was in favour of the development of telephones, especially in rural areas.

Mr. MALCOLM (Suffolk, Stowmarket) congratulated the noble Lord upon the immediate development of the telephone system which he hoped was going to take place under his ægis and authority, and he associated himself with the hope that it would be extended to the rural districts. He wished to ask how the telephone system was developing in the outskirts of London. He wished to know what facilities the noble Lord was taking to insist upon the opening of extension offices in the immediate neighbourhood of London so that they would not have to pay £17 or £18 for the telephone, which was a very high price compared with any of the capitals of Europe or even with rural areas.

*The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton) said that with regard to the Question put by the hon. Member for Stowmarket, he should like to have the particulars of the case he had mentioned, and he would enquire into it. They were endeavouring, as far as possible, to push the extension of the telephone system in London, and he did not understand why any difficulties had arisen in the hon. Member's case. With regard to the question raised by the hon. Member for East Clare, he could not give the list of places in Ireland where the extensions had been made, but he might say that no single application from Ireland which he had seen had been refused. His idea was to make a complete network throughout the whole of the United Kingdom, and then extend the wires of the exchanges to all the small places. The hon. Member for Islington had asked him three Questions. The first one was in regard to the capital expenditure in London. He might say that the amount expended on exchanges in London was £1,495,602. With regard to the accounts, it was rather quick to be asked to give any decision at the present moment, but he thought that there would be a great advantage in having the two accounts kept separate. There were many difficulties in the way, and it would hardly be possible to give a strictly accurate account, but he thought he might be able to arrange matters so as to enable the House to see fairly accurately what the expenditure was on telephones as compared with telegraphs. With regard to any arrangement which the Post Office might come to with the National Telephone Company, he wished to withdraw a word which he used yesterday, which did not accurately describe the position. He spoke of "negotiations," but the question had not got to negotiations yet. There were *pourparlers* going on, but they had not yet come to negotiations, although he hoped they would be able to come to some arrangement. If they did arrive at some arrangement the Question he had been asked was what opportunity of considering that agreement would be afforded the House. The exact form which that consideration must take was very difficult to state off-hand. Before the House was called upon to deal with the question and decide upon it, it should be considered by a Select Committee of the House, who should report upon it. If the Committee were of opinion that the agreement was a good one; it would certainly be to his benefit to have the support of a Select Committee in giving hon. Members all the assistance possible in dealing with the subject.

MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burghs) said the House had heard with satisfaction the line taken by the Postmaster General. He wished to point out, in view of the statement made last night, how extremely important it was to the public in general to know exactly what the attitude of the Government would be, and what might be the nature of the future negotiations. In view of the fact, now public property, that the Government were going to endeavour to buy the National Telephone Company's undertaking, people would hesitate at present before they went to the expense of putting up wires. He thought the Postmaster-General would consult the wishes of the community at large if he would, as soon as possible, bring the matter to a point. Let him hasten the negotiations. He had indicated that he intended to use the powers he possessed. Nothing would make him more popular as Postmaster-General than the bringing about of a settlement of the telephone question on a permanent basis. A strong man was wanted to stand up to the National Telephone Company. He hoped the noble Lord would answer that description. The announcement by the noble Lord as to a Select Committee was very satisfactory.

*LORD STANLEY: I think that will probably be the form.

*MR. DALZIEL said that was as far as they could reasonably expect the Postmaster-General to go at the present time. He hoped that in any action the noble Lord took he would feel strengthened and supported by the Report of the Select Committee. Supposing the negotiations to fail, the Select Committee should be instructed to consider whether Parliament should be asked for compulsory powers to acquire the undertaking. There were delays in providing a telephonic service, which were much greater than they ought to be. He thought the supervision of the Post Office system might be materially strengthened, and the service made more effective. Foreign countries were ahead of us in the matter of telephones.

*LORD STANLEY: They have very different powers from those we have in regard to wayleaves.

MR. DALZIEL said that might be, but he was sure Parliament would give the Postmaster-General whatever powers he wanted in regard to that matter. [AN HON. MEMBER: No.] Any Member of the House who would take the responsibility of opposing such a demand would have to reckon with his constituents when the time came. It was notorious that our telephone system was the worst in the world. It was a scandal and disgrace to this country that we should have such a system as we had at present. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not hesitate to ask any money which, within reasonable limits, he might require in order to deal satisfactorily with this question.

MR. ALEXANDER CROSS (Glasgow, Camlachie) said the Post Office had not yet commenced to make a distinction between the telegraph and the telephone accounts. He urged that a distinction should be made in order that the outlays in respect of each of the services might be known. He reminded the Postmaster-General that although they had been at great expense in creating trunk lines the National Telephone Company had the cream of the business. He would like to know what return the country was obtaining for the capital which the Post Office had expended on the telephone service. He understood that the trunk telephones were by no means a profitable investment. When the Government acquired the telegraphs a great deal of money had to be spent which might have been saved if the matter had been managed in a more business-like way. The noble Lord had now to deal with gentlemen of great astuteness in the Telephone Company, and they would no doubt do their best to obtain good terms in disposing of plant which in many cases was antiquated.

SIR GEORGE BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said he served for many months on a Committee two or three years ago which inquired into the question of the telephone service. He should like to know whether the recommendations of that Committee were carried out. He was somewhat surprised that it was found to be necessary to have another inquiry after the recommendations made by the Committee presided over by the late Mr. Hanbury.

*LORD STANLEY said that the suggestion was that the terms of the arrangement would be submitted to a Select Committee before they were presented to the House. There was no intention of inquiring into the telephone service.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Lord Stanley, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Victor Cavendish.

TELEGRAPH (MONEY) BILL.

"To provide for raising further money for the purpose of the Telegraph Acts, 1863 to 1899," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 135.]

METROPOLITAN IMPROVEMENTS (FUNDS) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) in the Chair.]

Clause 1.

MR. DALZIEL (Kircaldy Burghs) said he desired to move an Amendment which would raise the principle of the clause; and that was the control which the House of Commons ought to have in respect to the disposal of any surplus money after carrying out the improvement contemplated in The Mall. It was generally recognised that this improvement, when fully carried out, would do credit to the Government and to London itself; but it was also the case that the expense to be incurred would be three or four times more than the original estimate. Clause 1 provided that if the amount of money from the Battersea fund was not fully expended in this improvement the balance should be handed over, with the sanction of the Treasury, to the Commissioner of Works to carry out any other improvement he thought proper, in other parts of London, without the previous approval of Parliament. Of late years there had been too much tendency to take away the authority of the House of Commons over expenditure and put it into the hands of the Treasury. No doubt the Treasury officials discharged their arduous duties to the satisfaction of the country; but it was not a good thing to hand over to them increased powers, as had been done, not only in regard to Bills of this character, but in regard to the manner of expenditure in other Departments. He wished to retain that power in the hands of the House of Commons; and the Amendment he proposed was, in Clause 1, to leave out the word "Treasury" and insert "Parliament."

Amendment proposed—

"In Clause 1 to leave out the word 'Treasury' and insert the word 'Parliament.'" (*Mr. Dalziel*).

Question proposed, "That the word 'Treasury' stand part of the clause."

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY (Mr. VICTOR CAVENDISH, Derbyshire, W.) said he did not anticipate that there would be any surplus after this improvement had been fully carried out. He could assure the hon. Gentleman that no other important improvement in London would be undertaken by the Commissioner of Public Works without the approval of Parliament.

MR. DALZIEL said that in view of the statement of the hon. Gentleman he would withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

A Bill reported without Amendment.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

MR. O'MARA (Kilkenny, S.) asked what would be the position of the Government if they got through their business on the Order Paper?

***MR. SPEAKER**: The hon. Gentleman must confine his attention to this particular Order.

MR. O'MARA said he had no objection to the Bill. It was only a matter affecting the expenditure of £15,000 from the Battersea money by the Commissioner of Works. If every Commissioner of Works was as efficient as the hon. Gentleman the money entrusted to him would be well spent. But he appealed to the Government not to get through their programme on the Order Paper too soon.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING (LONDON) BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) said that this was one of those complicated Bills which referred to London. When electric lighting was introduced into London the old boundaries of the vestries existed; but after the Metropolitan Boroughs Act was passed these boundaries were all altered and the consequence was that the electric lighting areas got mixed. If this Bill were intended to adjust the boundaries so as to make the electric lighting areas correspond exactly with those of the metropolitan boroughs it would have been an undoubted advantage. But obviously that was impracticable under this Bill. The question dealt with was to balance inconvenience—to escape from one inconvenience and change it for another inconvenience. The Bill would certainly not bring about a state of perfection. In dealing with such matters as electric lighting, gas, and water, London should be dealt with as a whole, so that the plant could be put down as most convenient in natural areas and not in the artificial areas of the metropolitan boroughs. Under this Bill, which laid down entirely fictitious boundaries, the whole electrical supply of London would be placed in a disjointed state. Clause 1 provided that where, by reason of any alteration of boundary under the Local Government Act of 1899, any area, being part of the area of supply of the council of a metropolitan borough, had become situate outside the borough, that area should, as from the date of the passing of the Act, be transferred to, and become part of, the area of supply of the council of the borough in which the transferred area had become situated if that council was authorised to supply electricity within the borough, or, if that council was not so authorised, of any company so authorised, but only if the area of supply of that council or company adjoined the transferred area. Then followed a number of contingencies which showed that there was no perfection in the proposed scheme. Clause 2, which had reference to the adjustment of the area of supply, provided that where a council was authorised to supply electricity the area should become part of the area of supply, but only if the area of the supply adjoined the transferred area. But if the council did not supply, what then? He did not think that the first two clauses dealt adequately with the matter. There were two exceptions in Clause 2—namely, where the area consisted of a whole parish or the greater part of a parish, and where a company was authorised to supply within the borough in which the area had become situated at any point adjoining the area. Then it was proposed that the foregoing provisions should not apply in the case of any part of an area of supply in which mains or other works suitable to, and used for, the supply of electricity had been laid down or executed before the 1st day of January, 1904. Then there was the question of agreement between one company and another; and it was proposed that such agreements should have the force of an Act of Parliament. That was rather unusual. Why not proceed by Provisional Order, which would enable the public to have a say in the matter? A Provisional Order would appear on the Statute-books whereas no arrangement for the publicity of agreements was provided under the Bill. At present, borough councils were empowered to supply electric light, and no doubt it was intended to make that power operative; but it was impossible to know how far the Bill would secure that end. He did not intend to criticise the general effect of the Bill; but he wished to impress on the President of the Board of Trade the desirability of considering the electric supply of London as a whole under one governing body. That would tend to concentrated cheapness and good management. He would not oppose the Bill but would leave the responsibility in the matter with the President of the Board of Trade.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central) said he wished to remind the House that this Bill was a hybrid Bill, namely, a Bill brought in by the Government dealing with private interests, and it, therefore, would have to go to a Committee upstairs, and it was in Committee that the details of a measure of such a technical character could be practically examined. The hon. Gentleman described very accurately the broad outlines of the Bill, and had therefore relieved him from doing so. The hon. Gentleman complained that the Bill was not a complete solution of the difficulty. No doubt that was the case; but any attempt to meet the difficulty at this moment would not be at all an easy matter. All he claimed was that the Bill went some distance in the direction of reducing the abnormalities which followed from the Act of 1899, as regarded electric lighting areas. The Bill applied to small and unimportant alterations for which it would not be worth while for a local authority or company to introduce a Provisional Order. It was very expedient that those alterations should be made before the time when the local authorities were entitled to purchase. It was obvious that the transfer of areas from one authority to another would be very much more difficult as time went on. Where works had already been laid down they had been obliged to leave matters to be arranged according to agreement between the two companies or local authorities. He did not claim that the Bill would solve all difficulties, but it would assist solution when the problem came to be dealt with as a whole.

MR. BRIGG (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley) said that there were objections to the Bill which he would not press, seeing that it would be sent to a Select Committee, and that it was only intended to smooth the way for future legislation. Certainly the question of electric lighting in London would have to be dealt with in a large and comprehensive scheme, and possibly it would be wise to constitute an Electricity Board analogous to the London Water Board.

MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burghs) said the hon. Member for Mid Lanark deserved the thanks of the House for ascertaining the reason of the Government for introducing this Bill this afternoon. There had been three or four Bills put down upon the Paper for which the House had no explanation, and in regard to this particular and important matter he had not heard that there was any burning desire, outside, that the House of Commons should put aside all other matters to discuss it. Why was it that, at the most valuable period of the session, time was to be occupied in discussions of this kind, for which no special need had been established. As he understood, the Bill gave power to the Board of Trade to practically ignore any decision which might be arrived at by the Committee upstairs. The right hon. Gentleman must remember that the companies very often were not under the same local authority. In view of this Bill, he thought when the Government undertook to deal with local areas they ought to take power also to consolidate the local authorities, which was a thing that this Bill did not do. The right hon. Gentleman had been long enough at the Board of Trade to know that the one thing which created so much dissatisfaction among the people was the number of local authorities which had the management of the streets. Every day in the year the streets were being pulled up for something or other, and what was wanted was one central authority for the management of the streets, so that they might not be pulled up more than once a year. He was surprised that the right hon. Gentleman had not thought fit to take power to consult the local authorities. He did not know what the London County Council thought of this Bill, but apparently as there was no opposition from the hon. Member for Battersea they were satisfied.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) said he made no pretensions to have a mandate to speak for the London County Council on this or any other matter, but he felt compelled to respond to the invitation just extended to him. The Electric Lighting London Bill was not opposed by the London County Council, because it was a Bill which met public necessities in the degree that they were met by the Bill which the London County Council presented in the previous year, a Bill which, in deference to the Board of Trade, the Council did not persist in; the result was that the Board of Trade with the able assistance of the hon. Member for Mid Lanark, who really ought to be on the Treasury Bench leading the Government, did the work of the County Council. The Bill harmonised the electric lighting and borough areas which the new boundaries under the London Government Act disturbed, and to that extent it ought to be supported. In London there were thirty local government areas, of which one half were supplied with electric light by companies and one half by local authorities. He hoped this Bill would not be made the medium of transferring from a local authority to a private company any area of supply which it would be more profitable, from the ratepayers' point of view, for the local authority to keep. That possibility was worthy of note, in view of the fact that the Borough of Bermondsey was at present much perturbed about a readjustment of boundaries which, if sanctioned by the Board of Trade against the wish of the borough council, would inflict upon the local authority what they considered to be a material inconvenience and loss of profit. If any attempt was made to use this Bill for the purpose of giving private companies a numerical ascendancy in regard to the areas supplied by them, he hoped, in the interests of the public, the President of the Board of Trade would take the side of the local authority rather than that of the companies. Several matters required to be carefully watched, but if the Bill was going upstairs to a Hybrid Committee, before which the local authorities would be able to present their case, he would support the Second Reading.

MR. CUST (Southwark, Bermondsey) was understood to ask whether, if an area not coterminous with a borough desired to obtain from the local authority electric light, which the local authority was equally anxious to supply, this Bill would prohibit such an arrangement being arrived at. If that was the principle of the Bill, it would inflict a great injustice on certain localities which had incurred heavy expenditure on electric lighting undertakings, and would check similar enterprise in the poorer parts of London.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston) regarded the Bill as a small attempt on the part of the Government to bring about something approaching uniformity of action in regard to the lighting of the Metropolis. One had only to wander around the precincts of the Houses of Parliament to see some of the most disgraceful lighting to be found in any great town in the universe. It would be a defect in the Bill if it enabled private companies to increase their control over the general lighting of the Metropolis, because, whatever jealousy there might be on the part of some persons in regard to municipal trading, there could be no doubt that, if a local authority set up a generating station for locomotion purposes, every facility ought to be given to the local authority to control the lighting as well as the locomotion within its area, because a much better financial result was obtained from the combination of the two undertakings. He hoped, therefore, that, if possible, the Bill would be so modified in Committee as to give a bias in favour of local authorities acquiring extended powers of lighting in their own areas, and possibly, by combination, of giving a better service in particular districts. He was anxious that private companies should not obtain any advantage over local authorities.

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR did not think it possible for private companies to get any advantage under the Bill. The measure did not effect any question such as that to which the hon. Member was referring.

Sir WALTER FOSTER said that under these circumstances the Bill could be received only as a very small step in the direction of securing uniformity in the lighting of the Metropolis, but he hoped it would obtain a Second Reading and be sent to a Committee, by which all its details could be carefully inquired into.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed to a Select Committee of Five Members. Three to be nominated by the House, and Two by the Committee of Selection.

Ordered, That all Petitions against the Bill presented three clear days before the meeting of the Committee be referred to the Committee; that the Petitioners praying to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, or Agents be heard against the Bill, and Counsel heard in support of the Bill.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. Gerald Balfour.*)

Sir Walter Foster.

DOGS BILL.

[Second Reading.]

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. AILWYN FELLOWES (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey), in moving the Second Reading, reminded the House that the whole question of the law relating to dogs was considered in the year 1897 by a Departmental Committee over which the hon. Member for Chelsea presided. Of the several recommendations made by the Committee, the principal were that there should be greater stringency in granting exemptions from licence duty, and that additional powers should be given to county councils, enabling them to make by-laws for keeping dogs under proper control. Since 1897 several Bills dealing with the subject had been introduced, one of which, brought in last year by the late Mr. Hanbury, was very similar to the measure to which the House was now asked to give a Second Reading. Owing to the unfortunate death of Mr. Hanbury, and to the stress of public business, that Bill had to be dropped; but the Board of Agriculture had all along felt that some legislation was absolutely necessary. The present Bill proposed to consolidate certain existing enactments and to give effect to several of the recommendations of the Committee of 1897. The principal object of the Bill was to afford protection to owners of live stock from injury by dogs, particularly by sheep worrying. The gravity of the evil was known to many Members of the House, and certainly the information which had come to the Board of Agriculture showed that the feeling with regard to the matter was very widespread. The worst sufferers were those who lived in the great sheep-shearing districts of Scotland and Wales. He thought he ought to allude to the statement of the Chief Constable for the county of Banffshire, in which he stated that during four years prior to 1901 the number of sheep reported to him as worried was 333, and during the first half of the year 1902 no less than ninety-six sheep were worried. This had proved to be a very serious loss to the agriculturists of that county. The county of Banffshire was by no means an exceptional case. He would give the House one or two more examples out of a very large number which had reached the Board of Agriculture. In June last year there were seventy-six Southdown sheep killed at St. Mary Cray, Kent, and twenty injured in one night, and in January last year in Yorkshire there were twenty-one sheep worried. Last year at Banbury, in Oxfordshire, there were sixty-one sheep chased into a stream and drowned, six of them being actually worried. As regarded Scotland, he had already alluded to Banffshire, but he might say that there were many other cases with which he would not trouble the House. With reference to Wales there were last year cases where valuable prize sheep were worried, and in Ireland a gentleman from Tipperary had informed him that he lost something like £150 in ten years through sheep worrying by dogs. Those were only a few cases out of a great number which had been received by the Board of Agriculture, and the direct annual loss to agriculturists was very considerable and most serious; also there was indirect loss from the chasing of in-lamb ewes. Several resolutions has been sent up to the Board, not only from the chambers of agriculture in this country, but also from the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture and from the majority of the important agricultural societies of the whole kingdom. He might also point out that when Lord Onslow met the representatives of Scotch agriculture in Edinburgh special stress was laid upon this question of sheep worrying in Scotland. Therefore, he thought he had shown that this Bill was really necessary, and it was one which agriculturists all over the country urgently desired. He hoped the House would give the Bill a Second Reading.

The Bill consolidated and amended the law relating to the liability of dog-owners, assimilated the laws of the three countries, and made owners liable without proof of the mischievous propensities of the dog. It also gave power to the Board of Agriculture to make orders with regard to the wearing of collars by dogs, and that power would probably be delegated to the local authorities. The Bill also amended the present procedure of obtaining exemptions from dog duty, on the ground that the dog was kept solely for the purpose of tending sheep. That system had not worked well, and there was an enormous number of dogs that got exemptions to which they were not entitled. In the county of Montgomery, 1,747 licences were issued, and the exemptions numbered 6,220; in the county of Dumfries, 4,471 licences were issued, and the exemptions numbered 12,386; and in the county of Inverness, 2,748 licences were issued, and the exemptions numbered 17,772. [Cries of "Oh, Oh!"] It was proposed under the Bill to make the consent of a Petty Sessional Court a condition precedent to the granting of a certificate. That was the scope of the Bill, and he hoped it would be read a second time.

Motion Made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield) said it was an extraordinary measure which created a lot of new offences. Under it they would have to go to the magistrate to ask him to define a shepherd dog, and would later have to go before him again to pay a half-sovereign—not once nor twice, but perhaps half a dozen times—for their stray dogs. Under the present law, if a dog was proved to have chased and injured cattle the owner was liable, but this Bill would make it an offence that if a dog only chased a flock of geese or a herd of sheep without doing any damage at all, the police—if they wanted a case—could haul the owner before a magistrate. The Bill provided that, with a view to the prevention of worrying of sheep, no dog was to be allowed to stray between the hours of sunset and sunrise. In his opinion the real reason for the Bill was not the question of sheep worrying, because under the Common Law if it were proved that a dog had injured any neighbour's sheep the owner was liable to a penalty. The real reason—especially in England—was that the dogs were wanted to be kept in between sunset and sunrise for the protection of game and the assistance of the gamekeeper. He was glad that sporting dogs were not exempt from the Bill, but he regretted that it gave no power to the local authority, although power might be given later by the Board. In his view it would have been better to have left the matter in the hands of the district or county councils. He begged to move that the Bill be read that day six months.

Amendment proposed—

> "To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Mr. Bayley*).

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. O'MARA (Kilkenny, S.) said that under this Bill any poor, miserable animal, the joy of a widow's home, was affected. [Laughter]. Hon. Members laughed at that remark, but he thought that under this Bill cruelty to poor women's pet dogs might arise. He was not a lover of dogs himself, but that provision to prevent dogs from straying during all, or any, of the hours between sunset and sunrise, was absurd. They were legislating for all the dogs in the country, because the Bill did not define what a shepherd's dog was. He was sure the ordinary policeman could not tell a shepherd's dog from any other dog. He had no objection to a dog wearing a collar, but he objected to the wearing of a collar being compulsory, as was proposed by Sub-section (a) of Clause 2. It was proposed also, that the name and address of the owner should be on the collar. It came to this, that dogs were really not ordinary animals at all. They were a luxury, but they were not so much a luxury in Ireland as in England. A dog licence in England was 7s. 6d. and in Ireland 2s. 6d. [AN HON. MEMBER: Another injustice to Ireland.] That was absolutely the only benefit Ireland got from the Imperial connection. He thought the dog tax of 2s. 6d. was quite enough to pay without having to buy collars as well. He did not object to the name and address of the owner being on the collar, but why not go a step further and have the owner's photograph on the collar? Sub-section (b) of Clause 2 empowered the Board of Agriculture to make orders—

> "With a view to the prevention of worrying of sheep. for preventing dogs or any class of dogs from straying during all, or any of, the hours between sunset and sunrise."

That was a very ridiculous proposal. It seemed to him the resurrection of the curfew bell for dogs. Great inconvenience would be caused by having dogs chained up in the house all night. He entirely approved of Clause 1 which provided that—

> "The owner of a dog shall be liable in damages for injury done to any cattle by that dog."

If a man could afford the luxury of keeping a dog, he should have the luxury of paying damages for injury caused by the dog. He hoped the Government would not press the Bill. He would recommend them to introduce a simpler measure of one clause placing on the owner of a dog responsibility for any damage the animal did. This complicated Bill dealt with many matters which, in his opinion, were entirely foreign to its real object and character, and that being so, he must cordially support the Motion for its rejection. He objected to Clause 4, which proposed that, in order to obtain exemption from the Excise licence in respect of sheep dogs, the owner should require the previous consent of a Petty Sessional Court. The men who kept sheep dogs lived far away from the Petty Sessional Courts, and rather than waste a day going there it would be much more convenient to pay the tax and not seek exemption at all. The Bill altogether was unwise and unsatisfactory.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.) thought that this question should be considered seriously. Those who were acquainted with the damage done by stray dogs in country districts were perfectly aware that the Board of Agriculture had done no more than their duty in introducing this Bill to check that mischief. There were certain details of the Bill which would require reconsideration in Committee, but on the whole it would be a useful measure. He did not think that the provision in Clause 2 in regard to confining dogs between sunset and sunrise, would be sufficient. No doubt in some parts of the country the damage done by dogs to sheep was after dark, but in Scotland summer nights were very short. Two tenants of his own lost 100 lambs by worrying dogs, although the shepherds had been watching all night. It was found that a dog came from several miles off in early daylight. He thought it would be better to give the local authorities power to fix the hours during which dogs should not be allowed to be at large.

MR. BLACK (Banffshire) said that this was not a very brave Government, but he thought it was to be congratulated in having taken courage in both hands and brought in this Bill. Some hon. Members had expressed surprise that it had taken precedence of the Licensing Bill and the Scotch Education Bill, which the Prime Minister had said were of the first importance; but the very great necessity for the Bill had been explained by the hon. Gentleman who introduced it. Very interesting statistics had been made available to him for the North-east of Scotland in regard to sheep worrying by dogs. In one district, for the four years ending 1901, twenty-nine sheep had been killed by dogs, and fifty-four injured—quite independent of the injury done by the chasing of the sheep. That was a very serious matter for the crofter and small farmer, and it quite over-rode any feeling which hon. Members and others outside the House might have as to the inconvenience to which dogs were to be subjected. It was found in the district in the North-east of Scotland to which he had referred, that out of fifty-eight cases of sheep worrying in three years, twenty had occurred during the day and thirty-eight during the night. That showed that the period of confinement of the dogs under Section 2 should be made longer, although if they were confined during the night the number of cases of injury would be diminished by two-thirds. The second remedy proposed was that the dogs should wear collars bearing the names of their owners. Now, in the district to which he had referred, out of 101 cases dealt with, in only seventy-five could the owner be identified. There was one clause which he ventured to hope the Government would reconsider: he meant that dealing with exemption from duty. The hon. Gentleman could not have had in his mind when that clause was drafted the enormous distances which shepherds and small farmers in Inverness-shire, Argyle, Ross and Cromarty, and the Orkneys would have to travel to get to the Petty Sessions Court. It would take a whole week's work to get exemption, and the provision as it stood was quite out of the question. There was another particular in which the Government might improve the Bill. Farmers should be bound to bury sheep that had died, at such a depth as to prevent dogs getting at the carcase.

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said he thought the Bill was in many ways necessary, but there were a few small details which would have to be amended. For instance, Sub-section 4 of Clause I., referring to the chasing of dogs, would have to come out; it was quite an impossible provision. Another section stated that where the police had seized a dog it might be destroyed after five days. That was rather too short a time, and he suggested that it should be ten days. In regard to the provision that dogs must be confined between sunset and sunrise, he thought it would be better if the hours of confinement were fixed by the Board of Agriculture, because, if left to the local authorities, in some cases tyrannical rules might be laid down.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said that in his constituency there were a large number of small freeholders, almost all of whom had both sheep and sheep dogs, and he took the view that the Bill would be very oppressive to such small owners, and greatly increase their expenses. The special points which weighed in his mind against the Bill were three in number. They were not mere details, but went to the substance of the Bill. If the Bill were made optional he would withdraw his opposition to it, but if it were passed as it stood, it would be virtually forced on the country. Clause 2, which provided that every dog should wear a collar with badge, meant considerable cost and inconvenience to the small owner. Clause 3, which gave power to the police to seize and destroy dogs, and Clause 4, which dealt with exemptions, he was sure would be most oppressive to the poor owners or tenants. This application to magistrates was an additional step. The present exemption was an exemption based on legal grounds. The Excise officers would not be doing their duty if they did not refuse all exemptions which they thought could be legally refused. Were the magistrates, who were now to be put in, to act on the same grounds? If so, were the Excise officers to be directed to throw the responsibility on the magistrates and to accept their finding of fact as to whether the exemption must be given or not? The additional step would tend to become a mere form, but it would cause an additional difficulty to the poor owners.

Sir MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbrightshire) pointed out that a sheep dog would not work at all with a muzzle on. It was well known that a dog in such a case would not move from his master's heel. With regard to the subsection of Clause 2, it is a well-known fact that the dogs were always turned out of the farmhouse at night, that they were never by any chance allowed indoors, and some care should be taken on the part of the owners of such dogs to see that they did not stray, because it would be admitted by many that very often the worst devastation and damage was caused by those dogs which lay still all day and went out and worried sheep and cattle at night. He hoped this Bill would, when it was amended, pass through the House and come into force, not on the 1st January next, when the time it could be of any use was nearly over, but on the 1st August next.

Mr. BROADHURST (Leicester) said he was a great admirer of dogs and kept more than he was justified in doing. Yes, but he paid the licence for all of them. At the same time he was in favour of the principle of the Bill. All who had had any experience of the devastation that night dogs could make must desire some further restriction of their liberty. He would shoot the greatest pet he had if he thought he was a danger to his neighbours. Coming to the provisions of the Bill he asserted that anybody who knew anything of the subject was well aware that a dog could chase a flock of sheep without biting them and commit untold injury, especially at lambing time.

Sir FREDERICK BANBURY said the hon. Gentleman could not have read the Bill, because if a dog caused injury by chasing it came under the Act.

Mr. BROADHURST replied that he did not think the hon. Gentleman had had much experience of that sort of dog in his constituency. He (the speaker) had seen evidence of enormous injury to sheep and cattle by chasing. He did not see why fowls should not come within the scope of the Bill. Indeed, all property should be protected against vicious dogs, and every person keeping a dog should be made responsible for its control. But, while giving the fullest protection to the farmer and flock-owner, they should insist at the same time that no one should be liable for injury caused to flocks if they were unattended on the public highway or escaped through the negligence of the owners or of those in charge of them.

***Mr. WHITMORE** (Chelsea) thought it was unnecessary to say very much upon this Bill, because the House was apparently prepared to accept the principle of it, and the criticisms that had been brought against it were directed to matters of detail which could be better dealt with in Committee. But as Chairman of the Departmental Committee on whose recommendations this Bill was largely based, he ought to say this. That Committee was a very large Committee, and composed of gentlemen from all parts of the United Kingdom. They had come to the unanimous conclusion that the damage done to stock and sheep in the hill districts of Great Britain was really serious in extent and magnitude; they were also impressed with the fact that the present law was far from adequate for the prevention of this damage, and that the existing system of obtaining exemptions from licences from the Inland Revenue was such as to lead to the evasion of the law. This system must be fortified in some such way as that proposed by the Bill. He thanked the Government and the House for the way they had attempted to deal with these very real evils and cordially supported the Second Reading of the Bill.

MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire) said he had been a member of the Departmental Committee whose recommendations this Bill gave effect to. They had taken a considerable amount of evidence which was overwhelming as to the necessity for such a Bill as this. The Committee, no doubt, would not care to be responsible for the whole of the details, but, so far as the general principle of the Bill was concerned, they would gladly be held responsible for it. People in agricultural parts of the country held, not that the Bill went too far but that it did not go half far enough, and he was certain that it would be welcomed by the small farmers. The question they asked was why they should not have the right to shoot dogs that worried their sheep. The whole tendency of the evidence taken before the Committee was that the mischief was mainly done by dogs who were either ownerless or whose ownership was of a more or less nebulous character, and the general tendency of the Bill was to try to remedy that state of things. The existing right of exemption had been very largely abused. The original idea was that the farmer should not be taxed for a dog that was necessary to his trade, but a great many of those who were exempted were not farmers at all but persons who owned a cow, a sheep, or a goat. It would be a great hardship on Scotch farmers to have to go to the Sheriff, but no doubt the machinery in that respect could easily be amended. It had been said that the Bill ought to apply to localities and not to the country generally, but the whole intention of the Bill was that it should apply to localities though it was necessary that discretion should be left with the Board of Agriculture in order to secure uniformity in the case of two farming localities adjoining each other.

MR. SPEAR (Devonshire, Tavistock) expressed his appreciation of the action of the Board of Agriculture in bringing in the Bill. It afforded necessary and just protection to farmers, and would not seriously inconvenience any other section of the community. They often heard of cattle being killed and destroyed by dogs at night, but there was another very serious injury caused to sheep and cows through worrying by dogs just before the lambing and calving seasons. The precautions of the measure were very necessary indeed. One indirect advantage was that it would prevent night poaching.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL (Sir EDWARD CARSON, Dublin University) thought his hon. friend might very well be satisfied with the reception the Bill had met with. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Forest of Dean called attention to the power to seize stray dogs. He would remind him that that power already existed in the Metropolis, and, if it was necessary there, it was probably more necessary in the country. The other objection of the right hon. Gentleman was as to the difficulty of obtaining exemption. He certainly thought no difficulty should be thrown in the way of a farmer from getting exemption for a sheep dog, but at the same time it was quite clear that the exemption had been very largely abused, and it was necessary to consider how it could be confined to *bonâ fide* claimants. That, however, was a point which could very well be dealt with in Grand Committee. He submitted that the other objections taken were really objections of detail, and, as the great majority of the House appeared to be satisfied that some Bill ought to be passed on the lines proposed by the Government, he thought they might now take a division on the Second Reading.

*MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland) said that if this Bill was the result of the noble Lord's experiment in taking the advice and calling to his councils, farmers who should not be gentlemen, as he openly avowed in Scotland would be the policy of his Department, he could not congratulate him on the result, for a more stupid, impracticable Bill could hardly have been printed. He could not think that the advice of a practical farmer or gentleman in Scotland had been taken about the Bill. The Bill was certainly wanted, and all that was required now was to hand the management of it over to the county councils, and compel every dog to wear a collar with an indentifying number which the local authorities could well provide without throwing any cost on the owners; such a thing would entail little or no cost whatever. Clause 4 of the Bill could never have been considered by the Chairman of the Committee or the Solicitor-General. In some parts of the Highlands and Islands with which he was acquainted having to go and see the Sheriff in order to obtain an exemption would necessitate the absence of the crofter or farmer for six weeks, and therefore so far as Scotland was concerned this Bill was not worth the paper on which it was written.

And, it being half-past Seven of the clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed to-morrow.

EVENING SITTING.

BARNET DISTRICT GAS AND WATER BILL (BY ORDER).

[SECOND READING.]

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*MR. HUDSON (Hertfordshire, Hitchin) said he desired to enter a protest against the Second Reading of this Bill, in order that it might not be thought to have had the approval of those interested in the question of Hertford water. The Hertford unions and local authorities of that part of Hertford which he represented were strongly opposed to this Bill, as was also the Hertfordshire County Council. The hon. Member for Mid Hertfordshire was no doubt in favour of the Bill; but what most people in Hertford felt was that every water company which began supplying water in Hertford extended their field of operations, and eventually undertook to supply other counties with Hertford water. This particular company was now supplying one-third of the water which they obtained from Hertford to Hertford villages, and two-thirds to Middlesex. Hertford had been so drained by the two water companies which now took their water from the Lea Valley as to be almost denuded of water. He had no desire to prevent Hertford people from having Hertford water, but he did object to Hertford water being taken away and sold to other counties. The county of Hertford had been compelled to spend no less than £27,000 in defence of its water. He had said enough to show that Hertfordshire was strongly opposed to the Bill, and he would reserve his right to oppose it in Committee upstairs.

MR. COHEN (Islington, E.) said considering the friendly attitude of his hon. friend the Member for the Hitchin Division of Hertford it was almost unnecessary for him to say anything on this matter. He would merely point out that the Bill did not propose to impoverish Hertfordshire for the supply of Middlesex. Of the parishes they proposed to supply eight of the twelve were Hertfordshire villages, which meant that two-thirds of the water taken would be supplied to Hertford. Those who promoted this Bill would be content to consider any reasonable grievance that Hertfordshire people might bring before the Committee upstairs, to which he hoped this Bill would be sent, and which was the only competent tribunal to decide these matters. He hoped that the Bill would now be read a second time.

*MR. BAMFORD SLACK (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) said as representing that part of Barnet which was in Hertfordshire it was within his knowledge that the inhabitants were urgently in need of a constant, regular, and increased supply of water, and that supply could only at present be obtained through the agency of this company. The District Councils of Barnet and Finchley had asked the Company to afford a "constant" supply of water, and he therefore asked the House to give the Bill a Second Reading, and his constituents the water of which they were so urgently in need.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS (WAGES).

MR. SHACKLETON (Lancashire, Clitheroe) said in the few minutes it was his intention to take up the time of the House, he desired to speak more as regards the principle which underlay this Motion, rather than to deal with the rate of wage paid, or what should be paid. No doubt some of his hon. friends would go more into detail during the debate. We were sometimes told to "think Imperially," and to dream of Empire. Those who lived in constant and close contact with the worker, and had exceptional opportunities of knowing his feelings on public matters generally, found that, in his quiet and thoughtful moments, he cared very little about the number of square miles we might add to our territory, or how many square inches on the map we were able to paint red. He was more concerned, and rightly so, as to how he could make his home, which was his empire, brighter and happier, and as to how he could lessen the care and anxiety caused by the dependence from week to week, and from day to day, upon employment, in order to earn sufficient to meet the daily wants of his wife and family. His measure of comfort was to a large extent dependent upon the amount he was able to obtain for his labour. He was informed that the wages paid in the Government factories and dockyards was much less than the trade union rate paid for similar employment by outside firms. Some years ago, on the Motion of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Poplar, this House passed what was known as the fair wages clause, to apply to Government contractors. As to whether that had been honestly carried out or not, it is not his province to-night to inquire. This he would say, that this House was in duty bound to pay to its own workmen as good a standard rate of wages as that which they rightly demanded should be paid by their contractors. In using the words standard rate of wages in his Resolution, he desired the House to understand that he meant the trade union rate. This was a Lancashire phrase, and both employer and employed in that county clearly understood what it meant. They had to look at this question from all sides. The taxpayer should not be called upon to pay more to his workmen than he is himself able to obtain by trade union effort. The workman in the employment of the taxpayer should be content with the trade union rate. On this matter he spoke with some little experience. As a member of a municipal corporation for a number of years, and for a time chairman of the tramways committee of that corporation, it was part of his duty to negotiate for settlement the wages and conditions of labour in that department. The consideration of the ratepayer as well as the workmen was always before his mind, and he believed in this and in no other way could a fair and equitable settlement of these matters be made. There might be certain occupations in the Government factories and dockyards to which it might be difficult to find a similar class outside, or in which any organisation amongst the workpeople could be found. In these cases, their duty was to see that the wage was fixed at such a standard as would permit the workman and his family to live in a condition of comfort and respectability, equal with that of workmen in Government employment who were able to obtain the trade union rate.

There was a feeling amongst some hon. Members that these questions of wages and conditions of employment amongst Government workmen should not be too often brought before this House, and there was a feeling that certain hon. Members who represented dockyard and similar constituencies were too often pressed in matters relating to these particular constituencies, and that at elections dockyard questions occupied an undue share of the time of candidates. He was prepared to admit there was some truth in all this, but he did not see how, under the system at present adopted, it could be avoided. The remedy he would suggest was that all Government workers in every Department should be granted full trade union rights and conditions. It was said that the workmen were allowed to combine, but the logical effect of this combination was denied them. They were not permitted to select those whom they deemed best able to lay their grievance before the head of each Department, who by the way was the representative of those right hon. Gentlemen who were for the time being the responsible representatives of this House and the country. He was aware that various concessions had from time to time been granted, but the one cardinal principle of trades unionists, namely, that the workmen in combination shall have a right to appoint whom they think proper to conduct any negotiation with their employer, was denied them. At present he understood no one who was not a workman in the employ of the Government was allowed to represent the workmen. He spoke from twenty years experience as a worker in the mill, and as a trade union official, and in this he should have the full corroboration of his colleagues—that upon the acceptance of this principle largely depended whether the workman's organisation was of material value to him or not. The workman's executive might be trusted to appoint only such men as had experience and tact in dealing with these matters, and he said without hesitation that if this House desired that these matters should not occupy so much of its time, the only remedy was to give the workman the same right of combination and representation as that obtained by his fellow workman in outside occupations. This House should not, in his opinion, be the place to settle any of these technical trade matters, but should be more of a Court of Appeal, where serious differences and only serious differences should be brought for its consideration. In this matter, Sir, he only claimed what was the accepted principle of all the great trades and occupations of this country. On the whole it had worked well. The placing of responsibility on the men's representatives tended to widen their view of the situation and caused them to act wisely and judiciously.

In conclusion, he asked the Government to give this Motion their favourable consideration. There was nothing extravagant in its proposal. It was the minimum demand of every trades unionist in this country, and, if adopted, would only put the workman in the employment of the State in the position enjoyed by the men employed by a very large proportion of the municipalities, and of hundreds of thousands of their fellow workmen in the employment of private firms. By adopting this Resolution the Government would put themselves in line with those great municipal corporations who were setting a splendid example in raising the standard of living of thousands of their fellow countrymen. He begged to move.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.) in seconding the Motion, said that all they demanded was a just interpretation of the Fair Wages Resolution, coupled with a due consideration of the Report of the Royal Commission on Sweating, in which an increased sense of responsibility on the part of employers was advocated. As to the alleged difficulty of defining the "current wage," he had always contended that the point would be got over by taking the trade union rates for skilled labour, and the wages paid by municipalities and public authorities in the particular districts for unskilled labour. To show the present condition of affairs he would give two or three illustrations. In the factories at Woolwich, 2,600 men were employed as engineers' labourers at a wage of 21s. per week, whereas men doing the same class of work for Messrs. Armstrong, at Newcastle, or for Messrs. Mather and Platt, at Manchester, received 22s. and 23s. respectively, notwithstanding the difference in house-rent in London and the provinces. In the Royal Naval Victualling Yard at Deptford, although an increase of 1s. had recently been given, only 21s. per week was paid to men, 80 per cent. of whom did equally exhausting physical labour, who worked side by side with contractors' men in receipt of higher wages, and with the knowledge that men working in the docks in the vicinity obtained from 24s. to 30s. for precisely similar work. In the Royal Clothing Factory at Pimlico, men employed as warehousemen, and rated as third-class, received only 21s., whereas a similar class of work in the city of London was paid for at a much higher rate. A further grievance at Pimlico was the fact that, owing to a vicious system of classification, men at 21s. a week not only did the same work as, but actually had to superintend, others in receipt of higher wages.

With regard to women, of whom 1,500 were employed at Pimlico, the smartest hands were put on certain garments and paid by the piece; being naturally anxious to earn as much as possible they did the work very quickly, and the time thus taken was set up as the standard for all the workers in the factory, with the result that the less fortunate women were scarcely able to earn 10s. a week.

The gist of the question lay in the matter of housing. Twenty-one shillings was by no means a fair wage within the county of London. Men working in the Government Dockyard at Pembroke Docks could obtain far better lodgings for 3s. than men engaged at Woolwich or Deptford could get for 8s. Where rents were high Government wages should correspond, and the Home Department had recently recognised that principle by their action in regard to the police. The only advantage Government workers possessed over other workmen was in the greater constancy of their employment, but he contended that that advantage should be so used as to benefit the ratepayers and taxpayers by securing the best possible class of workmen. The other advantages frequently urged could be obtained by the men themselves from any friendly society by the payment of about 6d. per week. The Government were distinctly not doing their duty to the taxpayer. Cheap labour was bad labour. Not only in London, but throughout the world, the best employers recognised that it paid to give if anything a little more than the current rate of wages in order to get the *élite* of the labour market. The workman's health was his capital, and, just as the capitalist sought to invest his money safely and at as high a rate as was consistent with safety, so, too, the workman had a right to invest his capital governed by similar considerations. Men on low wages were not likely to succeed commercially or in any other sphere. Many of the great social difficulties which existed had been created by the fact that men who were used as machines, and worn out, left behind them a worn-out progeny. It was not only the duty of the Government to be in the first flight of employers, but it was the interest of the taxpayers also; for what made the population stronger and healthier could not ultimately make it poorer. Men who were properly paid would be able to leave behind them children who, having been well housed, clothed, and fed, would be able to hold their own against the nations of the world. He begged to second the Motion.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That this House is of opinion that the wages paid to the unskilled workers in Government factories and shipyards should be not less than the standard rate of wages paid for similar work in other employments in the respective districts."—(*Mr. Shackleton.*)

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University), in supporting the Motion, reminded the House that in 1893 it unanimously passed a Resolution declaring that—

> "No person in Her Majesty's naval establishments should be engaged at wages insufficient for proper maintenance, and that the conditions of labour as regards hours, wages, insurance against accidents, provision for old age, &c., should be such as to afford an example to private employers throughout the country."

That Resolution was accepted by the present Leader of the Opposition, who admitted its application to all branches of Government employment. That Resolution, like the present Motion, was general in its terms, because it was impossible for the House to do more than express the principle upon which the Government ought to act, leaving the *bonâ fide* carrying out of the principle in its details to the Government themselves. The difficulty in the application of such a Resolution was in respect of what was called unskilled labour, which often did not enjoy the protection of a trade union, and which must rely on the sense of justice of its employer. That reliance should be absolute where the Government was the employer, and no man should be employed under any circumstances by the Government at a wage insufficient for maintenance. But the proper wage must vary greatly from place to place owing to the factor of house rent, and therefore in each place the Government ought to pay their men what a good employer would pay. He could not believe that the Government would object to this Resolution, or that they would fail loyally to observe it if placed on the Journals of the House. The hon. Member who seconded the Motion had given instances which seemed to be at variance with the Resolution of 1893, but he hoped the Secretary of the Treasury would be able to assure the House that the facts had not been quite accurately stated, or, if they had, that the matter would be at once looked into. In conforming to this principle, the Government would be doing, not only what was just, but what was in the interest of the nation, because they would obtain better value for their money.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said that, as the Motion was simply carrying to completion the Resolution passed by the House in 1891, he hoped it would be accepted by the Government, and that the House, irrespective of Party, would unanimously agree in passing the Motion. He congratulated his hon. friends on the moderation of tone which had marked their speeches. The House was not asked to accept any proposition as to hours or wages. Parliament was not competent to lay down a "living wage" applicable to all classes and conditions throughout the country; but they could declare that the Government ought to be a model employer of labour. By setting a good example, the action of the Government would beneficially affect wages generally; but, on the other hand, if the Government stood on the level of the bad employer, wages would be prejudicially affected. The proposition put forward by this Motion was really unanswerable. The House had passed a Resolution under which contractors who did work for the Government were bound to pay the recognised rates of wages. Surely it would be the height of hypocrisy, in the face of that Resolution, for the Government of the day to refuse to observe the same rule. Over and over again pledges had been given by responsible Ministers that the Government should be a model employer. But while they all desired the Government to pay a proper rate of wages, they also remembered that they were present as the trustees of the taxpayers, and from that point of view he contended that it was not a right system that wages should be raised by the Government in the Departments under their control as the result of Parliamentary debates. For this reason he supported the Resolution of his hon. friend, and also because it placed the rate of Government wages on a sound and unassailable basis. His only regret was that the Resolution did not extend to skilled labour as well. He hoped that this question of wages would be placed on such a sound basis as to render such debates unnecessary in the future. They had gone up very considerably in regard to some of these matters. He knew there were a certain number of unskilled workers in Government employ who were only receiving 21s. a week. They would probably be asked what was the current rate of wages. In the London district, ever since the year 1899, the minimum rate for unskilled labour was 6d. per hour, and if it was true that the Government were paying below 6d. per hour they were not carrying out the Resolution of the House or putting themselves in the category of good employers. Probably they would be asked how they were going to decide what the current wage was. He noticed that his hon. friend in his Resolution used the term "standard rate" and not "current rate." The standard rate of wages meant the rate agreed upon by employers and employed and paid practically by all employers. When the Fair Wages Resolution which he introduced in 1891 was accepted by the House, he defined fair wages as the wages paid in any particular trade which were fixed by negotiations between employers and employed. That was his definition of current or standard rate of wages, and he hoped it would be on that basis that the Government accepted it.

He wished to refer to the Report of the Committee which inquired into the Fair Wages Resolution in 1897. That Committee was presided over by the present Lord Ridley and it contained a majority of hon. Members opposite. In the Report of the majority, which included the hon. Member for Peckham, there appeared a paragraph in which it was stated that the Government ought to throw its weight on the side of better rather than worse conditions of employment, and the Committee cordially endorsed the view that any agreement tending to regulate the rate of wages or the conditions of employment which might be come to between masters and men should be recognised and encouraged. The majority of that Commission, therefore, desired to endorse the view put forward by his hon. friend that the Government should take as their basis the rates of wages recognised between employers and employed. Very likely they would be told that there were many cases in which there was not a recognised rate of wages. No doubt it would be difficult for the Government, in some cases, to say what was a fair rate of wages to pay to the men they employed. It might be said that some authority would be needed to settle what was the standard rate of wages in districts where no recognised rate prevailed. Such an arbitrator existed in the Labour Department of the Board of Trade. He had had a vast amount of experience in this matter, and he found as a rule that the Departments were very anxious not to get at loggerheads with the contractors, and it was distasteful to the officers of the Department to have to inquire into the wages paid by their contractors, and consequently it was very difficult to get a proper inquiry in regard to such matters. What happened at the present moment when a dispute arose in regard to a contractor was that it was spread over such a long time that the contract was generally over before the dispute was settled. With regard to the so-called privileges enjoyed by men in Government departments, he thought they had been very much exaggerated. Those privileges had been estimated as being worth between 6d. and 1s. 6d. per week. He thought this question ought to be inquired into by some authority which was not personally interested in the matter; and it seemed to him to be a question for the Labour Department to decide. The Resolution before the House was one which he did not think the House could possibly disagree with. They had already pledged themeselves that those employed by the State should receive a fair rate of wages, that the State should be a model employer, and that the men employed should receive the current rate of wages. His hon. friend, by his Motion, was only doing what was very essential, and that was putting into a definite and concrete form a Resolution which had already been passed by the House. They had it in black and white already, that the Government should pay the recognised rate of wages, but, if this Resolution were carried, it would be an absolute instruction to all the different departments of the Government to do what the House desired, it would relieve the House of Commons of a difficult discussion on rates of wages, and place the Government in the category of really being good and model employers.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. VICTOR CAVENDISH, Derbyshire, N.) said there was nothing to complain of in the tone of the debate, and he was glad to be able to contribute to the harmony by saying at once that the Government were prepared to accept the Resolution. He thought it would be extremely difficult for any Government, after the Resolutions of 1891 and 1893 had been accepted by the House, to demur to the Resolution which was now before them. He maintained, however, that the Resolution they were now considering did nothing more than formally declare what was now the policy of the different departments of the Government. The departments had honestly and generously striven to carry out the two Fair Wages Resolutions of 1891 and 1893, which had been accepted by the present Government. If any proof was wanted that the Government were carrying out the policy embodied in those Resolutions they had it in what had been said during the present debate. They had had a very interesting debate, and a great variety of points had been raised, but, with a very trifling exception, scarcely any reference had been made to the terms of the Resolution before them. Contractors and other matters had been dealt with, but with the exception of the few observations made by the hon. and gallant Member for West Newington nothing substantial had been raised against the action of the Government. He did not wish to be led away from his subject too far, but, judging from the debate, he thought those who were responsible for the administration of the different departments could claim that no substantial charge had been made in the course of the debate that there had been any departure from those Resolutions. By their past action the Government had proved that they were model employers of labour, and they were determined to go on setting a good example to private employers in that respect. But there were two sides to the question. The character of the Government as employers of labour was not solely to be judged by the rates of wages which they paid their workmen. They had also to prove that they conducted their departments in a business-like manner. It was just as important that they should be able to set a good example to private firms in the economical and satisfactory conduct of their business as in the payment of fair wages. He thought that a tendency had been shown on the other side somewhat to depreciate the advantages which belonged to Government employment. Upon this point he would like to mention that the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition in 1893, when he was speaking as the Secretary of State for War, stated that the Government employees had many natural advantages, such as continuity of work irrespective of seasons or weather, holidays, sick pay, and other advantages. The right hon. Gentleman in the course of that speech dwelt upon those advantages and testified to their value. The hon. Member opposite had valued those advantages at 1s. 6d. per week, but he thought that was rather under-estimating them.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON explained that what he said was that he had heard those advantages estimated at 6d., and in some cases at 1s. 6d. per week.

Mr. VICTOR CAVENDISH said that to reckon their value at from 6d. to 1s. 6d. was, he thought, a somewhat low estimate. The Government had no difficulty in getting plenty of the best labour, which showed that they were able to hold their own in competition with those who had similar employment to offer. He did not think any serious accusation had been made against the Government. They were fully prepared to take their position as model employers. At the same time, it was due to an important body of contractors not to assume a position which would make it still harder for them to do the work required of them. Obligations had already been placed upon them by Resolutions of the House. And those obligations had been honestly and genuinely carried out. But if they were going to force the pace too much they might injure employment throughout the country. He undertook on behalf of the Government that they would continue to deserve the reputation of being good employers of labour. He might mention that only about a year ago cases were brought to the notice of the present Secretary of State for India which the right hon. Gentleman investigated for himself, and he afterwards caused adjustments to be made which he thought had the approval of all Parties in the House. These were questions which required the closest investigation, and he assured hon. Members that any cases which were brought to the notice of the Government would be dealt with carefully and honestly upon their merits. At the same time it should be realised that they had to take also into their consideration their duty to the taxpayers of the country.

Captain NORTON said the hon. Gentleman had stated that he had brought forward one or two minor matters. He had actually brought forward a number of cases where the Government were employing men at Woolwich, Deptford, and Pimlico at wages as low as 21s. per week, whilst the current rate of wages for unskilled labour, even for crossing sweepers, was 24s. per week. Those were not minor matters but the gist of the whole question.

Mr. CROOKS (Woolwich) expressed his gratification at the decision of the Government to accept the Resolution, but did not agree that they were entitled to the description of model employers. The current rate of wages in London for unskilled labour was about 30s. As the Government demanded the best service they should pay the best wages, and if they were to be regarded as model employers they should keep up the reputation claimed for them by the treatment given to the workers. He and his friends would not be satisfied with the passing of Resolutions and then getting no further. When he heard of the privileges and advantages of Government employment he only wished that Members on both Front Benches could realise what Government employment meant to some people. When going round a Government establishment some years ago he was taken to the tailoring department, where there were some women employed. He was told that they were the widows of men who had served the Government faithfully and well, and that they got 11s. a week. "Why, that is starvation," he said. "Oh," the chief of the department replied, "but it's constant." He hoped it would not be thought for a single moment that he was complaining of the present Government any more than of previous Governments. He joined with those who said it was very nearly time that this question was settled once for all, and that they should not everlastingly be putting the wages of men and women up to a sort of Dutch auction, and saying to them "Vote for these men and you will get so much more." It was positively immoral. What they asked was that the Government should accept the trades union rate of wages as the standard rate. Two Resolutions had already been passed agreeing to that, but still there were men and women in the Government employment working for less than ordinary employers could get them for. When he asked for an increase of his own wages from 40s. to 44s., he was met with the reply that with the increase sick allowance could not be paid. He agreed to the condition, and with 1s. a week insured himself for 14s. a week sick allowance with medical attendance. His wife and family had therefore the benefit of 3s. a week extra. He could not see where the advantages of Government employment came in. In His Majesty's dockyards shipwrights were paid a rate of wages which, if paid in private dockyards in connection with the execution of Government contracts, would cause the Admiralty to call attention to the fact that the conditions of the contracts were not being complied with. The rates of wages were: Thames, £2 2s.; Mersey, £2 2s.; Tyne, £1 19s. 6d.; Clyde, £1 18s.3d.; and Belfast, £1 18s. 3d. In His Majesty's dockyards the rate was £1 11s. It appeared to him that the privilege of being in Government employment was the privilege of being allowed to work for a low rate of wages. If they wanted quality as well as quantity they must pay for it. He did not complain of the quality of the men the Government got. He thought they got too good men and women for the money they paid. There were ledger keepers starting at 23s. and rising by an annual increase of 1s. a week to 30s.; and storemen rising from a minimum of 21s. to a maximum of 24s. a week. It was simply impossible for a man with a family to live in anything like decency within the metropolitan area with a wage of less than 30s. a week, in view of the amounts which were required for house rents.

Members of boards of guardians were struck by the fact that 90 per cent. of the applicants for medical orders were women whose husbands were earning from 21s. to 24s. a week. When the guardians said, "You should be in a position to get medical attendance for yourself and children," the applicants would say, "Could you do it?" What was the use of always talking about the market value of labour and stating that plenty of men could be got? That argument might be carried right up to the First Lord of the Treasury. Did the House of Commons realise its responsibility to those who too frequently were not on the register at all? It was a remarkable fact that the treatment men got in a good many places was affected by the fact whether they were or were not voters. He was against influence being brought to bear through the ballot box. Of the male workers in the Government employment at Pimlico, 80 per cent. were only getting a guinea a week. Rents in the district were 10s. a week for three rooms; 8s. for two rooms; and 6s. for one room. Could a man be a decent citizen under those conditions? The Government should take good care that bad employers should not be able to point to them as an example in regard to the rate of wages paid. He hoped the House would realise its enormous responsibility in regard to the lives of men and women whom the Government employed at low wages. If a man could not earn as much as would keep his home in decency and comfort, his wife must go out and help to supplement the income. He urged them not to pass the Resolution unless they meant to act up to it.

*MR. KEARLEY (Devonport) said that anybody listening to the Financial Secretary of the Treasury might have thought that he was returning thanks on behalf of the Government for a Resolution acknowledging their munificent liberality in the treatment of their employees. He was glad to see the Prime Minister present, because he wished to remind him that he made this a plank in his election programme at Manchester in 1895; and he presumed he had come with the intention of telling them what he considered to be a fair wage for unskilled labour in the Government's employ. He hoped he did not agree that the Government was already setting a good example to private employers. The hon. Member recalled the fact that the Resolution of the Member for Cambridge University some years ago was received in precisely the same way as this Resolution, and the present Leader of the Opposition, who was a member of the Government then in office, said they had ceased to believe in what was known as competition or starvation wages, being convinced that starvation wages meant starvation work. What was the outcome of it all? Did they prove to be model employers? No, they immediately established, in London, wages of £1 and 19s. a week. By dint of perseverance the representatives of this class of labour had succeeded in getting their wages increased by 2s. and 1s. respectively; but still the Government must know they did not now give a fair subsistence. It was said dockyard representatives were always clamouring for more money for their constituents, but this was perfectly untrue. He challenged anyone to say that he had put forward any demand of an extravagant character or that was not justified. He reminded the House that the rate of pay at Devonport was lower than in London, and he declared that the Government in no single trade paid anything like trade union rates of wages. He wanted the Prime Minister to tell them what he meant when he said he would accept the Resolution; let him tell them what the Government was going to do to render it a reality instead of it being, as it had been in the past, a mere farce. Would he give to the workmen the same privilege of dealing with their employers as workmen employed in private employ? Would he allow them to form a committee of trades and to bargain for fair terms. If he would do this they would get rid of that detestable and disgraceful system of the presentation of their demands in the form of petitions. There ought to be some machinery set up whereby these men could come face to face with their employers, so that they could put their case and make their demands. Then if the Government thought them unfair and excessive they could be referred to some independent authority, such as the Board of Trade. It was a most unpleasant task for those who represented this particular class of labour to have to speak in the House on the matter, but it was their duty. He feared that, unless they got an assurance as to how this Resolution was to be carried out, it would end in this mere expression of acceptance they had heard, and that they would be compelled to revive the question from time to time. He therefore hoped the Prime Minister would favour them with his views before the debate closed.

MR. PLATT-HIGGINS (Salford, N.) said that the proposition of those who supported the Resolution came to this—that if rents in a certain locality were high the wages of the labourers should also be high in order to pay the proprietor of the houses an undue rent. It was most unjust and unfair that the taxpayers should be called upon to put their hands in their pockets to hand over to the worker a high wage, and that he in turn should hand this increased wage to the proprietor of property to pay an extortionate rent. The Government should consider whether they could not remove all their factories and shipyards from the metropolitan area. This would be by far the best solution of the difficulty.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) said it was beginning to dawn on the House of Commons that the Resolution which had been accepted in so cheerful a mood by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury was not the kind of Resolution some Members expected would have been moved. It was beginning to dawn upon the men at Woolwich, Deptford, and elsewhere that a Resolution accepted by the House and the Government would be strangled in a month, and they would say to the Government, which whispered good things in the ear on Wednesday and broke them to the hope on Saturday afternoon—"Thank you for nothing." He was sorry to disturb the harmony of the House, but he disagreed with the view which had been taken of this question by the House of Commons in the last twelve years. Since 1888 many attempts had been made to deal with the conditions of employment, the hours of labour, and the wages paid; but none of them had been satisfactorily settled except that which fixed the eight hours day in all Government departments. When the eight hours day was appointed they were told that it would be unfair to the outside contractors and to the taxpayers. He had always thought differently, and believed that those who worked long hours did not produce the same class of work as those who worked shorter hours. The result of the Government adopting the eight hours, instead of the nine or nine and a half hours, instead of having increased the expense of Woolwich and other arsenals, had lessened it. He applied the same test to wages, and maintained that if they paid 21s. to a workman they would only get 19s. worth of work. The higher the wage paid, the more good work was got. No attempt had been made to approach this subject on scientific lines. The Government of both Parties had sheltered themselves behind the word "fair." An hon. Member had said that no one could define what was "reasonable." What was a fair wage? It might be that Mr. Brown at Deptford would pay what he considered a fair wage, and Mr. Jones would pay what he thought a fair wage at Battersea, but they would not pay the same amount. "Fair" was an unsatisfactory term, and might be interpreted in one way by a generous employer, and in another by a mean employer. The same remark applied to "current rate of wages," and "standard rate of wages." The Resolution, therefore, did not please him.

The Secretary of the Treasury had said that the Government wished to be a model employer. He disputed that the Government was a model employer. They were not even in the first flight of good employers, for while wages in private enterprise had increased all over the country from 40 to 60 per cent. the Government had failed to make a similar advance to the workmen in their employ. At one time the wages paid by municipalities to their employees were as bad as those paid to Government workmen; but he was glad to say that through the exertions of some of the members of the London County Council that condition had been altered. The London County Council, the School Board, and the Metropolitan Asylums Board were model employers, and he asked the Government to follow their example. As an illustration, he had interviewed a sweeper, now a watcher, who, thirty-five years ago, only received 19s. 6d. a week for working ten hours a day, Saturdays included. But he now got 30s. a week, with an eight hours day. A great deal had been said about the privileges and the emoluments enjoyed by the Government employees, but these, in his opinion, had been grossly exaggerated, and he believed that the men at Woolwich would commute them for a cash payment of 1s. or 1s. 6d. per week in addition to their present wages, and the men at Deptford for an additional 4s. or 5s. per week. For the payment of 1s. a week the members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers got 10s. a week when unemployed, 10s. a week when sick, 10s. per week for superannuation allowance, £12 for funeral expenses, and £5 for insurance, migration, and other advantages. He was prepared to say that if the wages of the workers in the Pimlico establishment were raised from 21s. to 27s. or 28s., the men would be able to obtain all their privileges cheaper than they now enjoyed them. They would never settle this question until the Government followed the example of the municipal authorities. It was ridiculous that the Imperial Parliament should be a sub-Committee on the wages question; and preposterous that its time should be wasted in discussing the policemen's boots, soldiers' coats, or Government workmen's wages when they ought to be discussing greater problems which pressed for settlement.

The London County Council at its inception was troubled with such questions, but a resolution was passed that the rate of wages to be paid should be the rate agreed upon between the employers' association and the trade union, and in practice obtaining in the area where the work was executed. The result was, that there was no log-rolling at Spring Gardens; no pressure was brought to bear on members; there was no demand for fancy rates; and municipal government went on uninterruptedly, all because they adopted a sensible rule. He advocated the adoption of the same rule by the Government. It avoided friction, it closured agitation, it saved public bodies from log-rolling and from endless petitions containing grossly exaggerated statements. Until the Government adopted a similar policy, they would never be free from organised pressure, sometimes improperly applied, which their many industrial dependents could bring to bear upon them. He contended that cheap labour meant redundant labour. He knew that if they employed men at 21s. a week, there would be 100 more men than would be necessary if they were paid at a decent rate of wages. He was glad to have the approving nod of one of the best employers in the engineering trade in the country. Cheap labour meant redundant labour, because no one living in London could give the amount of labour he ought to give if he were only paid 21s. a week, and out of that had to pay 8s. 6d. for rent. The result was that the Government service was too often filled up by redundant men—men who did their work in a malingering way, and who did not intend to do a great deal of work. And, considering the example set to them by those who ruled in high places, they could not be altogether complained of. The Resolution would be a failure and a sham unless it were clearly established that the current rate of wages should be the trade union rate of wages. He, therefore, moved to add at the end of the Resolution the words "And such wages shall be those agreed upon by the trade union and employers' association, and in practice obtained where the work is performed." If that Amendment were accepted, Members of the House would be saved from pressure and log-rolling. It might be said that the Government gave preference in their employment to Reserve soldiers and pensioners. If that were so, people who received pensions or other emoluments had no right to lower the standard of wages and comfort of their fellowworkmen. It was hard that the civilian worker of this country should be handicapped by competition with the ex-soldier and sailor who, being in receipt of a pension, could work for a lower wage. It was time that this kind of thing was stopped, and the acceptance of the Resolution before the House would stop it. It was also desirable that elections should not be influenced by promises on the part of candidates to get increased pay for dockyard workers. At the last election at Devonport the successful candidate secured his return by such a promise.

Mr. KEARLEY: I did not.

Mr. JOHN BURNS said he was referring to the junior Member for Devonport, who ought never to have been elected, but who was chosen because he promised an addition to the dockyard workers' pay of 1s., 2s., and even 3s. weekly. He begged to move.

Mr. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green) seconded the Amendment. He complained that workers in Government establishments in Ireland were equally in a disadvantageous position. They found that the Government was by no means a model employer. At Ivybridge the labourers got 16s. weekly while private employers like Guinness and the railway companies were paying 21s. This conduct of the Government only encouraged private individuals to cut down wages. Another grievance Irish workers—especially in Dublin—suffered from was the high rents extorted, and the result was that the Government employee, what with getting several shillings below the standard rate of wage and having to pay exorbitant house rent, was in a most unfortunate position.

Amendment proposed—

"At the end of the Question to add the words, 'And the standard rate of wages shall be those recognised by associations of employers and in practice obtained by the trade unions in such trades.'"—(*Mr. John Burns.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

*MR. REGINALD LUCAS (Portsmouth) said that those who were principally concerned in representing the interests of Government employees were quite prepared to be told that those who were employed by the Government had certain advantages. They had the advantage of continuity of employment, and they were in a position to look forward to a pension. But Government employees were divided into two classes—namely, the established and the hired class. The latter class did not receive a pension when they left the service; but only a gratuity represented by a very moderate sum, and therefore did not derive any very great advantage in that respect. Then, again, in many of the grades a very long time elapsed before any rise in pay was given, and in many departments much more was expected of the workman than was the case formerly. He had no desire to take up an attitude of hostility towards the Government, because he thought they had shown a desire, wherever possible, to meet the reasonable demands of Government employees; and it was not to be expected that with a wave of a wand or the stroke of a pen all demands could be met at once. During the last few years a good deal had been done. But the Government employees were at a disadvantage as compared with other workmen employed by municipalities and private firms. The average wage for an ordinary labourer was 24s. a week, but in the Government employment it was 20s., and on the establishment 19s. Joiners on the Thames, Mersey, Clyde, Belfast, and Tyne earned a wage of £2 per week of fifty-two hours, which worked out at about 9¼d. per hour. In the dockyards the pay was for forty-eight hours £1 11s. to £1 12s. 6d., or about 8d. an hour. Then in the Government employment there were many anomalies requiring attention. There were anomalies of classification. There was a scale of pay and pension in the Ordnance Department at Woolwich, introduced in 1902, and never yet extended to Portsmouth or Devonport. Again there was a strange differentiation made in the pay of the employees in the Army and Navy Ordnance Departments. He did not regard the Government as unjust or niggardly, but the method of Government employment was so complicated that it required great care and attention to make it systematic.

*MR. SHACKLETON said he was prepared to accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for Battersea, because it more clearly expressed the object he had in view and would be more easily understood throughout the country.

MR. ERNEST GRAY (West Ham, N.) said he would have had no difficulty in accepting the Resolution, but he had some doubt as to how it would have benefited workmen, and he had been anxious to ascertain from the Government what action they really proposed to take in regard to it, how they would bring it into operation, and what increased demands would be made on the taxpayer, or whether it would meet the same fate as similar Resolutions passed in previous years. He fully concurred with the object the hon. Gentleman had in view, but he would suggest to him that it was taking a somewhat unfair advantage of the House to spring on it an important Amendment at eleven o'clock, without any previous notice of it appearing on the Paper, and when a large number of Members had left the House under the impression that the Resolution would be put from the Chair in the form in which it was originally moved. The hon. Gentleman was usually a close observer of Parliamentary procedure; and he was sure he would admit that the course he had adopted was exceedingly unusual. The Amendment was a very important one; and he regretted it had not been put on the Paper, as if it had been it would have removed any criticism which he might be disposed to offer to the Resolution. He agreed the Amendment was necessary, as without it the Resolution would be a mere pious expression of opinion; but the course adopted in regard to it was very inconvenient and unusual. The Resolution was on the Paper for some days, and there was every opportunity of putting the Amendment down also. He was familiar with Government factories in the London area but none of them were within his constituency; and he was, therefore, free from any personal pressure in the matter. He had, however, always felt that it was not fair for the Government to take advantage of the position of pensioners, and secure their labour at a lower rate than would have to be paid to men who did not enjoy pensions. He did not think it was creditable to the State Departments to expect men to live in decency, let alone comfort, in the metropolitan area at a wage of 21s., 22s., or 23s. a week. Such men were only a few pence above the poverty line; and it was quite impossible for them to live decent and comfortable lives. That ought not to be tolerated by the State, which should readily grant the rate of wages paid by the model employer. He hoped the Resolution would not be grudgingly accepted by the House, but that it would be accepted cheerfully. He did not think it was to the credit of the State that the present condition of affairs should have been permitted to exist for such a long period. He went further, and said that he did not understand the old cry which was brought forward year after year, that if wages were increased in the Government factories the increase would go into the hands of house jobbers, who would charge exorbitant rents. Lord Goschen, when he was First Lord of the Admiralty, said that if wages were increased at the Deptford Victualling Yard, rents would immediately be increased. Why should not the Government in the vicinity of those great factories make provision for the housing of its employees just as the model employer did? He was not altogether in favour of too much State interference, but there were cases where a labourer had to be near his work and not have to spend hours in travelling backward and forward. In a place like Woolwich some attempt ought to be made in this direction. In conclusion, as representing one of the largest constituencies of working men in the country, he desired to support the Resolution.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.) said there was much with which he personally sympathised in the speech of the hon. Member for Battersea; but he was surprised that the hon. Member should have moved this Amendment, because it was quite impossible for the departments of the Government concerned to examine it, and it would obviously be most improper for the House, as the representatives of the taxpayers, to come to a decision upon it after three-quarters of an hour's debate. Therefore, although the discussion had proved interesting and might prove useful, he did not suppose that the hon. Member desired that the House should be asked to vote on this matter. The hon. Member himself had told the House, in language of a most impressive character, how difficult and dangerous these questions were, and that for the House to be constantly dealing with questions of wages, on the inspiration of persons who were returned by employees of the Government, was a great misuse of our Parliamentary institutions. He concurred with the hon. Member. One of the dangers to which that House and also the municipalities were exposed was that electoral pressure might be brought to bear upon them to modify the rate of wages, possibly to the advantage of a certain class of employees, but, on the whole, to the disadvantage of the great body of the workmen in the country. With the small opportunity which he had had of examining the Amendment he did not profess to be able to give useful guidance to the House; but it seemed to him that there were very great difficulties in the way of this Amendment, because it was based on the supposition, not merely that skilled labour was organised, but also that unskilled labour was organised. There were organisations of unskilled labour; but to say that the great body of unskilled labour in this country was organised was really to mislead the House; and, unless there were wages agreed upon between employers on the one side and those who represented organised labour on the other, this Resolution as amended really lost all its meaning. There were other difficulties in laying down a hard-and-fast rule of this kind. Did the hon. Member propose that the rate of wages should be fixed according to the rate prevailing in the locality, or according to the average of the various wages prevailing over the whole country?

MR. JOHN BURNS said in the locality where the work was executed.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR asked how they were to deal with cases in which the Government was practically the only employer of skilled labour of a particular kind, such as at Enfield, Woolwich and the dockyards. In those cases there was no open market which would enable the Government to have a sure guide as to what the local wages were in certain classes of labour. If they took the average of the whole country, they all knew that the trade union rate of wages varied largely, and the Government must be forced in such a case to strike some kind of average which would have something in the nature of a national basis. In regard to unskilled labour, the difficulties were still greater, because the Dockers and General Labourers' Union was not a universal organisation, and the wages were not dealt with between the employers and the employed in the simple manner which would enable the Government to fix a rate without difficulty and doubt. He understood that the Dockers and General Labourers' Union had fixed 6d. an hour as the rate of wages in London. But that was not for continuous employment but merely for a number of hours, a day, or a week. How could casual labour of that kind be compared with regular employment at the dockyards, for instance? What this Government had promised to do, and what preceding Governments had promised to do, was to endeavour, so far as they could, to follow the example of the best employers in the various districts in the trades in which they themselves were concerned. The Government therefore proposed to go on in accordance with the principles involved in the Resolution which they had accepted; but it was unreasonable to ask them now to accept a rider to that Resolution of unknown effect, and the result of which they had had no opportunity of considering.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON asked how the right hon. Gentleman would define a standard rate of wages if not in the direction of the Amendment.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said he did not understand the hon. Gentleman's interruption. The endeavour of the Government must be to act as indulgent and benevolent employers, and to pay the current rate of wages arranged between the good employers and the various classes of workmen in the various districts where they had factories and workshops.

Mr. JOHN BURNS said that was the trade union rate of wages.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said that if that was what was meant, why add this rider?

Mr. SHACKLETON: For clearer definition.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said the Government must be allowed to consider whether the general definition of the Resolution was or was not modified by the rider which had been sprung upon the House. Surely they should allow the Government, the magnitude of whose Estimates they denounced when other matters of expenditure were being discussed, to consider whether those Estimates would not be enormously increased, to the detriment of the working classes and every other class of the community, by the rider to the Resolution. He thought there was extreme danger in the growth and increase of direct employment by the State. He did not like the system; and he feared, from the speeches which he had heard that night, despite their moderation—with the substance of which he agreed—that this danger was more imminent even than he had anticipated.

Mr. SHACKLETON moved that the Question be now put.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: I cannot put that Motion upon this Amendment which was only put from the Chair at twenty minutes past eleven.

Colonel PILKINGTON (Lancashire, Newton) said he was prepared to vote for the Resolution as it appeared on the Paper, but it was unreasonable to ask the Government to go any further. The Government were great employers of labour and the condition of service which they offered were the best.

And, it being Midnight, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed to-morrow.

Adjourned at two minutes after Twelve o'clock.

An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision of the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 24th March, 1904.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with:—South-Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway (Extension of Time).

And also the Certificate that the further proofs required by the Standing Orders Committee in respect of the following Bill have been given:—Bristol Tramways (Extensions) [H.L.].

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Richard Jaeger's Patent. Petition of Henry Ernest Victor Baron de Barreto, praying for leave to introduce a Bill for rendering valid certain Letters Patent granted to Richard Jaeger in respect of an invention for an improved process for the dry slaking of lime, and apparatus therefor; together with a copy of the proposed Bill annexed thereto; read, and referred to the Examiners.

Victoria University of Manchester Bill [H.L.]. Reported, with Amendments.

North Wales Electric Power Bill [H.L.]; Bristol Tramways (Extensions) Bill [H.L.]. Read 2ª, and committed. The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Great Northern and City Railway (Extension of Time) Bill. Read 2ª, and committed.

Maidenhead Bridge Bill [H.L.]; Liverpool and Wigan Churches Bill [H.L.]; Weaver Navigation (Additional Finance) Bill [H.L.]; Weaver Navigation (Constitution and Finance) Bill [H.L.]; Neath, Pontardawe, and Brynaman Railway Bill [H.L.]; Barry Railway (Steam Vessels) Bill [H.L.]; Cardiff Railway Bill [H.L.]; Great Western Railway Bill [H.L.]; Alexandra (Newport and South Wales) Docks and Railway Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Committee of Selection. That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; viz.:—

E. Kimberley,
L. Sinclair,
L. Bateman,
L. O'Hagan,
L. Newton (chairman).

agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly. The Committee to meet on Tuesday the 26th of April next at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills.

Felixstowe Gas Bill; Gomersal Gas Bill; Kettering Improvement Bill; Norwich Water Bill. Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; and referred to the Examiners.

Milwr and District Mines Drainage Bill [H.L.]. The King's consent signified; and Bill reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Preston and Blackburn Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Metropolitan Common Scheme (Farnborough) Provisional Order Bill. Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 41.)

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES)

No. 3128. Russia (Odessa and district).

No. 3129. Germany (Estimates for 1904).

No. 3130. Nantes and district.

AFRICA, No. 4 (1904).

Correspondence relating to the recruitment of labour in the British Central Africa Protectorate for employment in the Transvaal (in continuation of "Africa, No. 2 (1903)").

WEST INDIES.

Return of the exports of sugar and fruit from the British West Indies to England, Canada, and to all other countries, for the years 1899–1900, and 1902–1903. Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

NATIONAL DEBT ANNUITIES.

Account of the gross amount of all bank annuities, and any annuities for terms of years, transferred, and of all sums of money paid to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt, and the gross amount of annuities for lives and for terms of years which have been granted for the same, and contracts for payments on death which have been made within the year ended 5th January, 1904. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

SEA FISHERIES BILL [H.L.].

Report from the Select Committee (with the Proceedings of the Committee and Appendix), made, and to be printed. (No. 36.). Minutes of Evidence laid upon the Table, and to be delivered out. Bill reported, with an amendment, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House; and to be printed as amended. (No. 37.)

NEW BILLS.

OUTDOOR RELIEF (FRIENDLY SOCIETIES) BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to amend the Outdoor Relief (Friendly Societies) Act, 1894, was presented by the Lord Monkswell; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Thursday the 21st of April next. (No. 38.)

OPEN SPACES BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to consolidate enactments relating to open spaces, was presented by the Lord Tweedmouth (for the Earl of Onslow); read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 39.)

SITE FOR DUKE OF YORK'S SCHOOL BILL [H.L.].

House in Committee (according to order); and Amendments proposed by the Chairman of Committee's Committee made.

Moved, "That the Standing Committee be negatived."—(*Lord Windsor.*)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (The Earl of HALSBURY): Why is it proposed to negative the Standing Committee?

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Lord BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH): My Lords, I think it reasonable that the Standing Committee should be negatived because this partakes largely of the nature of a private Bill. It has been before me in the ordinary procedure, and I think it more appropriate that it should not go to the Standing Committee.

On Question, Standing Committee negatived; the Report of Amendments to be received to-morrow.

SALE OF INTOXICANTS TO CHILDREN BILL [H.L.].

[SECOND READING].

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

*LORD DUNBOYNE: My Lords, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill I would very briefly explain the necessity for it and its object. I am aware that the particular kind of enactment of which the Act of 1901 is a part is a class of legislation on which your Lordships differ very much; but I do not think there will be any difference of opinion amongst your Lordships that when an Act of Parliament is passed it should be made effective and not be allowed to be evaded, as I think I can show the Act of 1901 has been. That Act provides that every holder of a licence who knowingly sells or delivers, or allows any person to sell or deliver, any description of intoxicating liquor to any person under the age of fourteen years, except in corked or sealed vessels, shall be liable to a penalty. These provisions are continually being evaded, for unscrupulous publicans have discovered that by forbidding their servants to serve children except in accordance with the provisions of the Act, and by exhibiting a notice to that effect in the public house, they are not responsible if their servants supply intoxicating liquors to children contrary to the Act. This, my Lords, was decided in the case of Emary and Nolloth. In that case intoxicating liquor was knowingly sold to a child under the age of fourteen —as a fact, the child was only nine years of age—in a bottle neither corked nor sealed, by a servant of the publican acting within the general scope of his authority and employment, but contrary to the expressed orders and without the knowledge of his master, who was himself in charge of the premises at the time and actually serving in the bar. It was held in that case, and no doubt rightly held, that the publican could not be convicted of "knowingly allowing" a person to sell intoxicating liquor in an uncorked or unsealed vessel to a child under the age of fourteen. Since that decision it has been found impossible to enforce the Act in many places, for notices such as I have described are constantly exhibited in public houses, and, when a child comes in, the publican has merely to turn his back or become engrossed in conversation with a customer, or go into the bar parlour and the child can be served and no one is responsible, the penalty being attached only to the publican and not to the person other than the publican who serves the child. This Bill is intended to meet that defect. It will not in any way interfere with the legitimate business of respectable publicans, and there are many, I am glad to say, who observe the spirit as well as the letter of the law; but it will affect those who might escape from the law and avoid it in the way I have described. This Bill merely provides that the publican and the person who actually serves the child contrary to the provisions of the Act of 1901 shall be made responsible for the penalties imposed by that Act, notwithstanding that any notice that the servants are forbidden to serve children contrary to the Act shall be exhibited on the premises. The Bill is intended to cure a defect which experience has shown to exist in the original Act. I have stated the facts simply and without exaggeration, and I trust your Lordships will allow the Bill to be read a second time. If noble Lords should be of opinion that the Bill goes a little too far in making the publican liable when his employee serves the liquor contrary to his orders and without his knowledge, I would be willing to meet that objection at a further stage; but I trust that your Lordships will allow the Bill, as it now stands, to be read a second time and that His Majesty's Government will give it their support so that it may not only pass your Lordships' House but be steered with safety through its course in the other House.

Moved, That the Bill be now read 2^{a}.—(*Lord Dunboyne.*)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, I have thought it right to communicate with the Court by whom the decision referred to by the noble Lord was arrived at. I quite agree that in some respects the law may be amended in the direction he desires. But I think the Bill goes a great deal too far. I think that in the circumstances the last two lines would be quite enough to pass into law, namely—

> "The agent or servant actually serving or supplying such liquor shall be liable to the penalties aforesaid."

That could not be enforced in the case to which the noble Lord referred because the Act as it stands makes the only person liable to the penalty the licence-holder, and, of course, the servant, not being the licensed person, could not be properly convicted. To make the master liable in any event would be a mistake, and I could not assent to it. I think the noble Lord has a little misunderstood the decision in the case to which he referred. The ground on which the decision was arrived at, according to the Judges' view of what they decided, was that the master had given express orders to his servants not to do the act complained of. It was not a case of a master endeavouring to evade responsibility by pretending not to know what was going on. He was innocent of the act itself and had given most definite orders that it should not be done. Whether the Judges were right or wrong in the interpretation of fact is immaterial. That was the theory upon which they proceeded. If, however, a publican leaves a person in charge of his business so that he is his *alter ego*, then undoubtedly he would be responsible for the act of that person. I think that the principle which the Court maintained in that case would be very much shaken if this Bill as it now stands were to pass into law. If the noble Lord is prepared to restrict the Bill to the last two lines which I have read, I am ready to assent to the Second Reading.

THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON: My Lords, I am very glad to hear the observations which have fallen from the noble and learned Earl on the Woolsack, and I trust that the noble Lord who has introduced this Bill will agree to the suggestion which has been made. The legislation in question has done an immense amount of good already, and, if the loophole of evading it to which the noble Lord has referred is stopped, it will save the children of this country from the contamination of the public house. This Act, which has been, on the whole, extremely well worked throughout London, and has not been opposed by the brewers and publicans generally, is one of the most hopeful and useful pieces of temperance legislation that have been passed, and it would be a great pity if, by the rejection of this modified Amendment, it should be spoilt through the existence of the flaw explained by the noble Lord in charge of the Bill. I, therefore, hope your Lordships will give the Bill a Second Reading.

*LORD DUNBOYNE: I may say that I shall be very pleased to accept the noble and learned Lord's suggestion and to limit the Bill in the way he desires, which can be done when the Bill reaches the Committee stage.

On Question, Bill read 2^a, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday, the 21st April next.

WILD BIRDS PROTECTION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

[THIRD READING.]

Bill read 3^a(according to Order), with the Amendments.

*THE EARL OF WEMYSS moved an Amendment prohibiting the use of a pole-trap "which does not instantaneously kill." In 1822, an Act was passed to prevent Cruelty to Animals — horses, cows, sheep, etc. It was still referred to as Martin's Act, who was known as "the great philanthropist of beasts." His noble friend took a higher flight and sought to be known as the great philanthropist of birds. But there were birds and birds. Now the birds which his noble friend proposed by this Bill to protect were birds of prey which cruelly destroyed other creatures, and did a tremendous amount of damage to valuable property, to grouse and sheep. Lambs' tongues and sheeps' eyes were the favourite food of many of these destructive birds. He had received two letters on the subject — one from a Mr. Cruikshank, who wrote from Glasgow, and the other from a gentleman in Edinburgh. Both of his correspondents were thoroughly acquainted with this subject. Mr. Cruikshank wrote that it would be a bad business for grouse moors if this Bill became law, as, on an extensive treeless expanse of a moor, it would be practically impossible for the keepers to kill down the peregrines and sparrow-hawks. The letter from Edinburgh was to the same effect. This correspondent said it would be a serious matter for many Scottish lairds, especially in the northern and western isles, where the peregrine falcon existed in great numbers. His correspondent pointed out, for example, that on the Island of Hoy, which ought easily to realise over 1,000 brace of grouse, only half that number were secured. And why? Six pairs of peregrines nested in the rocky precipices hundreds of feet in height so that they could not be reached by a gun. As these birds would not be attracted by a bait, the only method of catching them was by building cairns on the top of the cliffs, and capping with turf in which a trap was placed. This would be illegal if the Bill passed. His noble friend proposed by this Bill to render illegal the use of the pole-trap. Was there no cruelty through the use of other traps? What about rabbit traps, traps for foxes, and so on? He supported his noble friend in his desire to prevent cruelty where it could be done, and he believed a trap had recently been invented which instantaneously killed the bird caught in it. He had got one of these traps and had suggested to his noble friend in charge of the Bill (the Marquess of Granby) that he should come and inspect and sit upon this trap, but he had not been to see it. This was a Bill to protect birds which cruelly destroyed other creatures. If it became law, and it was impossible to catch birds of prey by the use of the traps in question, so far from cruelty being diminished, it would be very largely increased; because every one of these birds of prey tortured and killed large numbers of other useful birds. He therefore moved his Amendment, the purport of which was that no trap should be allowed which did not instantaneously kill any bird which came into it.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, Clause 1, line 7, to leave out from the word 'instrument' to the word 'any' in line 8, and to insert the words 'which does not instantaneously kill.'"—(*The Earl of Wemyss*).

*THE MARQUESS OF GRANBY pointed out that the Bill had gone through all its stages in the House of Commons, and as it had already reached its Third Reading in their Lordships' House he sincerely hoped the Amendment would not be pressed to a Division. The Bill itself was a very simple one, and had met with a considerable amount of approbation in the country. The Amendment would by its extreme severity of action militate against the general operation of the measure, which deserved every consideration at the hands of those who desired to abolish what might be called unnecessary trapping. With regard to the letters Lord Wemyss had quoted, he might say that for a long time past he had forbidden the use of these traps on grouse moors with which he was connected, and had not found the slightest diminution in the number of grouse. The keepers had not experienced any difficulty in keeping down birds of prey. The adoption of the Amendment would lead to vexatious prosecutions, because it was absolutely impossssible to guarantee that every bird would come down on to a particular trap at a particular angle, and any person who had a grudge against any landowner or keeper and saw a bird trapped, might say that death was not instantaneous, and that the bird struggled for some time after it was caught. On many grounds it would be exceedingly unwise to overload the Bill with a provision of the kind proposed, which would make it unworkable and nullify the general good that it would do. He therefore hoped the Amendment would not be pressed.

LORD TWEEDMOUTH hoped the House would not accept the Amendment moved by Lord Wemyss, which would take away with one hand all that was given by the Bill with the other. If the Amendment was carried, any pole-trap might be used provided that on the pole, tree, or cairn was fixed a trap which instantaneously killed the bird that settled on it. But how was that to be arrived at? He had seen the traps to which the noble Earl referred. The way in which instantaneous killing was arrived at was by giving such a bend to the claws of the trap as to catch the bird in the body, by which means the life was squeezed out of it at once. That was a capital arrangement, and, provided that they could assure that a bird of a particular size pitched on to a trap of a particular size, the bird was caught in this way; but it by no means followed that the trap was successful in other cases. A pole-trap was described in the Memorandum of the Bill as a steel spring trap with teeth, generally fastened by a chain to the top of a pole in a clearing of a wood. That was perfectly true so far as some portions of the country were concerned, but frequently a pole or cairn was set up in an open moorland, and owing to the fact that it was the only perching place in the vicinity, not merely birds of prey but every kind of bird perched upon it. All sorts of birds, many of them very harmless, were caught in these traps. His noble friend had said that the preservation of grouse depended on the maintenance of these traps. He could assure him that he was entirely wrong. There were moors after moors throughout Scotland where the keepers were strictly enjoined not to use these traps at all, simply because they caught so many more birds than they were intended to catch, and on which the grouse were fully preserved. Noble Lords, he was sure, were anxious that some of the rarer birds of prey should not be destroyed altogether. He did not suppose there were any birds so frequently caught, or so much injured by these traps, as peregrines and eagles in the open moorlands. He did not think his hon. friends in the other House who were responsible for this Bill were either sentimentalists or people who did not care for sport. Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Sydney Buxton, who backed the Bill, were both distinguished naturalists—they were both sportsmen and neither of them could be called a sentimentalist. The Bill was not intended to pander to any mere feeling of sentiment, but to meet a real desire on the part of a great many people throughout the length and breadth of the country, and he did not believe that the passing of it would interfere in the least with the successful preservation of game, although, of course, in certain places other methods would have to be adopted in order to catch verminous birds.

The Earl of KIMBERLEY expressed the hope that the Amendment would not be accepted. He had tried the so-called instantaneous-killing trap and could assure the House that it resulted in more cruelty than the other traps. In nine times out of ten it failed to do what it was sold to do. If the Bill passed, as he hoped it would, there would be perfect liberty to trap on the ground. He had consulted an experienced vermin trapper and had been assured that it would be quite easy to get rid of mischievous birds by trapping on the ground.

The Earl of WEMYSS said that, as it appeared to be of no use dividing the House upon his Amendment, he would be content to let it drop.

On Question, Amendment negatived.

Moved, That the Bill do pass.—(*The Marquess of Granby.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

Bill passed, and returned to the Commons.

Lord Tweedmouth.

NAVAL PRIZE BILL [H.L.].

House in Committee (according to order). Bill reported without Amendment. Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow.

METROPOLITAN IMPROVEMENTS (FUNDS) BILL.

Brought from the Commons.

Read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª To-morrow. (No. 40.)

House adjourned at five minutes past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 24th March, 1904.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH.)

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz.:—Weston-super-Mare Grand Pier Bill [Lords]. Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (COMPLIANCE WITH PROOFS REQUIRED BY STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, examined pursuant to the Resolution of the Select Committee on Standing Orders agreed to by the House on the 22nd day of March, compliance with the further proofs required by the Select Committee on Standing Orders has been proved, viz.:—Bristol Tramways (Extensions) Bill [Lords].

Chippenham Gas Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Great Eastern Railway Bill (King's Consent signified). Read the third time, and passed.

Kirkby-in-Ashfield Urban District Gas Bill; Sheppy Gas Bill; Torquay Tramways Bill; Wellington (Somerset) Gas Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

St. Marylebone Electric Lighting Bill. Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP E).

Sir **ALEXANDER H. BROWN** reported from the Committee on Group E of Private Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, they had adjourned till Thursday, 14th April, at Two of the clock. Report to lie upon the Table.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Mr. **HALSEY** reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had added to the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, the following fifteen Members in respect of the Railways (Private Sidings) Bill:—Sir John Brunner, Sir Frederick Banbury, Mr. Alexander Cross, Mr. Cripps, Mr. Bell, Mr. Black, Mr. Field, Mr. Kerr, Mr. Parrott, Sir Joseph Dimsdale, Colonel Lockwood, Mr. Reginald Lucas, Mr. Stroyan, Mr. Ure, and Mr. Osmond Williams.

Mr. **HALSEY** further reported; That they had added to the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure the following fifteen Members in respect of the Hall-Marking of Foreign Plate Bill:—Mr. Norman, Mr. Caldwell, Mr. Bathurst, Sir James Joicey, Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, Mr. Langley, Mr. Schwann, Mr. Henderson, Mr. Lowe, Mr. Bull, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Mr. Charles Murray, Mr. Bonar Law, Colonel Denny, and Mr. Massey-Mainwaring.

Mr. **HALSEY** further reported; That they had added to the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, the following fifteen Members in respect of the Savings Banks Acts Amendment Bill:—Sir Frederick Banbury, Sir James Woodhouse, Mr. Broadhurst, Sir Brampton Gurdon, Sir William Holland, Mr. O'Shaughnessy, Sir George Bartley, Mr. Edmund Faber, Mr. William Lawrence, Sir James Haslett, Sir Samuel Hoare, Mr. John Johnson, Sir George Fardell, Mr. Hayes Fisher, and Mr. Yoxall.

Mr. **HALSEY** further reported; That they had added to the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and manufactures, the following fifteen Members in respect of the Police (Superannuation) Bill:—Sir Robert Reid, Mr. Spear, Sir Howard Vincent, Mr. Edmund Robertson, Mr. Hay, Mr. Helme, Mr. Heywood Johnstone, Mr. Ainsworth, Mr. John Hutton, Colonel Stopford-Sackville, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Thomas Bayley, Mr. Tomkinson, Captain Bagot, and Mr. Hudson.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to—Wild Birds Protection Acts Amendment Bill, with Amendments.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the Law relating to the Prevention of Cruelty to Children." [Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Amendment) Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confer further powers on the Tynemouth Gas Company." [Tynemouth Gas Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Preston, Chorley, and Horwich Tramways Company to construct works; and for other purposes." [Preston, Chorley, and Horwich Tramways Bill [Lords.]

Tynemouth Gas Bill [Lords]; Preston, Chorley, and Horwich Tramways Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

HOUSING OF THE WOKING CLASSES, ETC., BILL.

Petition from Falkirk, against; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCE HOLDERS.

Petition from Swansea, for redress of grievances; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCES (RENEWAL).

Petitions against alteration of Law: from Modbury; Sydenham; Treorchy; Halifax; Aylsham; Lincoln; Bolton; Bacup; Caerphilly; Gerards Bridge; Luton; Tarleton; Gateshead; Glasgow; Swansea (two); Cromer; Rawdon; and Cradley Heath; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF BUTTER BILL.

Petitions against; from Aylesbury; East Ham; Exeter; and Waltham Cross; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRANSVAAL (CHINESE LABOUR ORDINANCE).

Petition from Appleby, for withdrawal; to lie upon the Table.

NATIONAL DEBT ANNUITIES.

Account presented, of the Gross Amount of all Bank Annuities and any Annuities for terms of years transferred, and of all Sums of Money paid to the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt, and the Gross Amount of Annuities for Lives and for terms of years, etc., granted within the year ended 5th January, 1904 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 109.]

AFRICA (No. 4, 1904).

Copy presented, of Correspondence relating to the Recruitment of Labour in the British Central Africa Protectorate for employment in the Transvaal [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

WEST INDIES.

Copy presented, of Return of the Exports of Sugar and Fruit from the British West Indies to England, Canada, and to all other Countries for the years 1899–1900 and 1902–03 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE (BRITISH COLONIES WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES).

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 21st March; *Mr. Gerald Balfour*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 110.]

WAR OFFICE (RE-CONSTITUTION) COMMITTEE.

Copy presented, of Report of the War Office (Re-constitution) Committee, Part III. [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

MUSICAL COPYRIGHT BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from the Standing Committee on Law, etc.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 111.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 111.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 137.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Cork Lunatic Asylum Attendants' Badge.

Mr. SLOAN (Belfast S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that at a meeting of the Governors of the Cork Lunatic Asylum, held on the 7th instant, a resolution was passed condemning the crown in the centre of the badge worn on the caps of the attendants, and deciding to discontinue its use in future on the grounds that it was a Party badge and repulsive to the feelings of the attendants; and, if so, will he say if such resolution has the sanction of the Irish Government.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) I am informed that a resolution of the character mentioned was passed at a meeting of the Asylum Committee on the 18th instant after a number of members had left. The resolution does not require the sanction of the Government.

Prison-Made Goods.

Captain BAGOT (Westmoreland, Kendal): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can state in how many British prisons mats are made by the prisoners; whether such mats are sold in competition with privately-made British mats; if so, by whose authority; or, if not, what is done with them; whether he can state the approximate number of prisoners in Great Britain employed on making mats, brushes, or other articles which compete in the market with private enterprise; and whether he will consider the advisability of marking such goods with a broad arrow or other distinctive mark.

(Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas.) I can answer only for prisons in England and Wales. In twenty-two of these mats have been made in the current year. Government Departments take almost the whole output, the rest is sold to private firms. The quantities are so small that they cannot, I think, interfere with the general trade; and the Prison Commissioners take great care that there shall be no competition with free labour at "cutting prices." About 11,000 prisoners are engaged daily in productive industries, including those mentioned in the Question, and of these it is estimated that about 100 may be engaged on mats for private sale. Articles other than mats are very rarely sold to private firms, and only when exceptional necessity arises. I do not think that the suggested marking of the goods is desirable; it might have an effect precisely the opposite of that which my hon. and gallant friend probably desires.

Accounts of London and India Dock Company.

Mr. CUMMING MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he has been furnished with a profit and loss statement of the several properties belonging to the London and India Dock Company, particularly the result of the working and number of ships entering during the last twelve months of this dock of 100 acres, the working of St. Katherine Dock of twenty-three acres, and the tonnage of rubbish shot into barges there, and amount received for same during the year, also the working account of Cutter Street five acres, showing the profit and loss during the last twelve months.

(Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.) No, Sir, I have no information on the subject.

Trade Arbitrations—Stamp Duty.

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the awards of Arbitrators in trade disputes are liable to stamp duty; and, if so, since what date have they been so liable, and what is the amount of the stamp duty charged.

(Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.) There is no exemption from stamp duty in favour of the documents referred to, which are chargeable with the usual scale of duty under the heading of "Award" in the First Schedule to the Stamp Act, 1891.

Pay, etc., of Scotch Post Office Night Messengers.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): To ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that the night messengers at Sheffield and other English offices are established officers with the advantages of a yearly rise of pay and pension; and, as the work performed by the Scotch night messengers is equally important, will he now grant them established appointments similar to those held by the night messengers at Sheffield and other English offices.

(Answered by Lord Stanley.) I am aware that at two offices in England, namely Sheffield and Hull, a few of the adult night telegraph messengers are established on scale wages; but the arrangement is exceptional, and, on vacancies, unestablished messengers are to be employed.

Telegraph Office for Rosnakill, County Donegal.

Mr. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that the Milford Rural District Council, being the local authority for the district in which the town of Rosnakill is situate, have unanimously agreed to give to the Post Office the usual guarantee requisite for the establishment of a telegraph station at Rosnakill, county Donegal; and, if so, seeing that Rosnakill has a large monthly market, and is the chief business centre for that district, he will reconsider his decision and accede to the wishes of the Milford District Council by establishing a telegraph office at this town.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) My predecessor explained to the hon. Member, in answer to a Question on the 5th March last year,† that he would not be justified in opening a telegraph office at Rosnakill even under guarantee, because there was already a telegraph office within three quarters of a mile, which appeared to meet the needs of the district. I will have renewed inquiry made and let the hon. Member know the result in due course.

Salaries of Irish Sub-postmasters.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is prepared to consider any representations for the improvement of the present salaries and positions of sub-postmasters in Ireland; whether he is aware that a sub-postmaster handling £20,000 a-year of public money is only paid a salary of £74 a year, out of which he has to provide a competent assistant, an office fire, light, twine, and sealing-wax, leaving him about £10 a year for himself by way of salary; and whether he would be prepared to consider a graduated scheme for emolument based upon the amount of business transacted in each office.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) I have recently sanctioned a scheme under which the remuneration at some of the sub-offices throughout the United Kingdom, especially the smaller ones, will be improved, and instructions are being issued to give effect to it as soon as possible. Without fuller particulars I am unable to identify the case to which the hon. Member specially refers. The emoluments at a sub-office are based upon the total amount of business transacted. In addition to the salary, commissions are paid upon postal order, money order, savings bank, and telegraph business, where transacted; so that it by no means follows that the salary of a sub-postmaster represents his total emoluments.

South African and East African Mail Subsidies.

Mr. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): To ask the Postmaster-General if he will say what subsidy is paid for the conveyance of mails to South Africa and East Africa respectively; and if he will take into consideration the expediency of calling for tenders for service from London to the Cape by the east and the west route alternately.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) The amount of the subsidy paid to the Union Castle Mail Steamship Company for the conveyance of mails to and from South Africa is £135,000 a year; and a payment of £9,000 a year to the British India Steam Navigation Company is the only subsidy at present given for the conveyance of British mails to East Africa. The contract for the conveyance of the South African mails is between the company and the Cape Government, and, as it will not run out till the year 1910, some years must elapse before such a change as that suggested can come into practical consideration.

Promotion of Postmen to Postmasterships.

Mr. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.) To ask the Postmaster-General if postmen are still eligible for appointment to established postmasterships; and, if so, will he state why only one vacancy out of seventeen occurring in the Manchester surveyor's district since June, 1897, has been awarded to a postman; and, if any special qualifications are necessary for these postmasterships, will postmen be allowed opportunities for qualifying.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) Postmen are eligible for appointment to established postmasterships, and applications from them are always carefully considered with those of other candidates. If one only has been appointed recently in the Manchester district it is because other candidates were more suitable. A postman can, in the performance of his work, exhibit the qualities desirable in a postmaster, and it would not be practicable to employ him on other work.

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† See (4) *Debates* cxviii., 1542.

Liability of Foundation Manager of Voluntary School for Expenditure.

MR. HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somersetshire, E.): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education if, and under what circumstances, a foundation manager of a voluntary school is personally liable for expenditure ordered by the general body of managers.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) As the right hon. Gentleman is probably aware, there is no distinction to be drawn as regards pecuniary liability between one manager and another. I have nothing to add to the answers as to managers appointed by local authorities which I gave to the hon. Member for the Luton Division of Bedfordshire on 25th February,† and to the hon. Member for North Monmouthshire on 7th March.‡

Fixing of "Appointed Day" in Monmouthshire.

MR. McKENNA (Monmouthshire, N.): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether, with a view to the guidance of the School Boards, which, in the ordinary course, will shortly have to make a precept for the expenses of the coming half year, he can state what will be the appointed day for the coming into operation of the Education Act in the county of Monmouth.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) The Board are making an Order for fixing 1st June as the appointed day for the coming into operation of the Education Act in the county of Monmouth, or such later date as the Board may appoint. I have every hope that no delay beyond 1st June will be necessary; but, as has been explained to the county council, the Board of Education do not consider it consistent with their duty to bring the Act into operation in an area where the local authority has decided not to administer the Act in its integrity.

Duties on Registration of Deeds in Ireland.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin County, N.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether on the registration of deeds in Ireland there are paid, in addition to office fees, a duty on every affidavit lodged for the purpose of registration, and also a duty on every memorial; whether any such duties are levied or leviable in Scotland, or in England outside York, Middlesex, and Kingston-upon-Hull; and whether, if any distinction is made in this matter to the disadvantage of Ireland, he will take steps to end it.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) The duties levied in Ireland are not peculiar to Ireland, but are prescribed by the Schedule to the Stamp Act, 1891, as chargeable on the instrument in question wherever such instruments are used. It is possible that there may be differences between one part of the United Kingdom and another, as regards the extent to which it is necessary or customary to make use of such instruments. But no difference is created under the Stamp Acts.

Grants to Schools in Highland Crofting Counties.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that the special grants to schools in the Highland crofting counties for the year ending 31st December, 1903, amounted to £970, a decrease of £1,280 as compared with the previous year; and can he state what circumstances have brought about this decrease.

(*Answered by Mr. A. Graham Murray.*) The amount of special grant referred to in the Question is £1,200, and it has all been expended at the close of each financial year, 31st March. The table from which the hon. Member has taken the figures relates only to the calendar year. It may sometimes happen that within that period a smaller amount has been paid, although the total for the financial year did not vary. This did happen in 1903, which has misled the hon. Member.

Licensed Victuallers in London—Transfers and Bankruptcies.

DR. HUTCHINSON (Sussex, Rye): To ask the Secretary of State for the

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxx., 987.
‡ See (4) *Debates*, cxxxi., 282.

Home Department if he will state the number of licensed victuallers in the county of London upon the 1st day of January, 1904, and the average number in the last five years of transfers and of bankrupts among these licensed victuallers.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas.*) Returns from the clerks to the licensing justices show (1) that there were 5,417 licensed victuallers in the county of London in the year 1903, and (2) that the average number of transfers of victuallers' licences during the last five years has been 1,345. It appears that the average number of bankruptcies among licensed victuallers in the county of London during the last five years was forty-nine.

Results attained by Vivisection.

SIR JOHN ROLLESTON (Leicester): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in view of the 14,906 experiments upon living animals in 1902, he can obtain from the institutions or persons to whom certificates were granted, a statement of the practical results in scientific knowledge or in the improvement of medical treatment which can be traced to those experiments.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas.*) Certificates are not granted under the Cruelty to Animals Act, 1876, to institutions. Persons holding certificates under the Act publish in considerable numbers in books, journals, and the proceedings of learned societies, reports of the experiments performed by them. I think that these reports enable those who are interested and qualified to judge as to the results which the experiments have yielded, or are likely to yield, in the advancement of scientific knowledge or the improvement of medical treatment. I may point out that by far the most of the experiments quoted in the Question are inoculations, many of which are performed either for diagnosis or in connection with the preparation and standardising of drugs and curative sera, of which the practical utility is well-known.

Hearing of Summonses under the Education and Children's Employment Acts.

MR. TALBOT (Oxford University): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether summonses under the Education Acts are now heard by the justices in certain districts of London in other places than police Courts; and, if so, whether it would be possible to make such an arrangement obligatory in all metropolitan districts and in all populous places; and whether summonses under the Children's Employment Act, 1903, could be similarly treated.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas.*) In one or two districts of London the county magistrates hold sittings to hear cases under the Education Acts, and these sittings are necessarily held in places other than the metropolitan police Courts. To make such an arrangement obligatory in London or in other populous places would require legislation. There has not yet been sufficient experience of cases under the Employment of Children Act to enable me to form any opinion as to how they should be dealt with.

Carriage of Arms without Licence in Ireland.

MR. SLOAN: To ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland if his attention has been called to the evidence given at the Clare Petty Sessions held recently, where persons were charged with poaching; that in some instances men were caught with guns who had not even a house licence for firearms; and, if so, will he say what action he proposes to take; and will he further state the number of detections made by the Inland Revenue officers in King's county for breaches of the Gun Licence Acts during the past five years; the number of detections made by the police under the Peace Preservation Act in the same county; and the number of arms seized for the past five years.

(*Answered by Mr. Atkinson.*) Two persons, L. Daly and J. Kelly, were proceeded against on the occasion mentioned. The brother of the former, who was duly licensed, left the country some time ago, and the defendant, in ignorance of the law, failed to get a transfer of the licence. He has now remedied the omission. Kelly was proceeded against in error for his brother, and I understand fresh proceedings are about to be instituted against the latter. When the case has been heard the question of a prosecution under the Peace Preservation Act will be considered. Inquiries are also being made in another case in which it is reported that a man carried a gun without a licence of any kind. There have been ten detections by the police under the Peace Preservation Act, and eleven weapons seized in King's county during the past five years. I have no information respecting detections by officers of the Inland Revenue.

Solway Salmon Fishery Laws—Suggested Legislation.

MR. CLAUDE LOWTHER (Cumberland, Eskdale): To ask the hon. Member for North Huntingdonshire, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he will now state if it is the intention of the Government to introduce a measure this session dealing with the present state of the Solway salmon fishery laws; and, if so, when the measure will be introduced.

(*Answered by Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes.*) A Bill dealing with the fishery laws at present governing the Solway is in a forward state of preparation, and I hope that it may be possible to introduce it at an early date.

Claims of Sirdar Balvant Ramchandra.

MR. WEIR: To ask the Secretary of State for India whether the claims made by Sirdar Balvant Ramchandra, native of Poona, which are set forth in a letter dated 25th August, 1901, addressed to the Secretary to the Government of Bombay, have yet received the consideration promised; and, if so, will he state the nature of the decision arrived at.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) There has been no change in the situation, so far as I am aware, since my predecessor answered a similar Question of the hon. Member's on the 7th May last.†

Land Revenue Defaulters in India.

MR. WEIR: To ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is now in a position to state the number of writs and warrants issued in each province in India against land revenue defaulters for the year 1902–3; and will he say how the figures compare with the year 1892–3.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) I have received from the Government of India the Return which they undertook to have prepared on a uniform plan for the year 1901–2 by the local governments, and I will lay it upon the Table of the House. For the reason mentioned by my predecessor in his answer to the hon. Member's Question on 23rd July,‡ 1903, I am unable to furnish comparative figures for the year 1892–3.

Indian Army—Compensation to Officers for Expense of Transfer.

SIR SEYMOUR KING (Hull, Central): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether the attention of his military advisers has been directed to the fact that as a result of the unification of the Indian Army, officers are liable to be shifted, on promotion, and more frequently without promotion, from one end of India to another, sometimes within short periods, each change involving a break up and renewal of establishment, and a considerable expense to the officer concerned, and whether, at least in cases where the transfer is not accompanied by substantial promotion, but is made with no advantage to the individual, reasonable compensation for the expense involved to him by such transfer could be awarded.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) I will consult the Government of India on this subject.

Indian Official Secrets Act.

MR. SCHWANN: To ask the Secretary of State for India whether His Majesty's Government proposes to sanction the Act to amend the Indian Official Secrets Act of 1889, lately passed by the Government of India; or whether, in view of the opposition to the Act voiced by the Indian and Anglo-Indian Press, and by large and influential sections of the educated classes of India, he will advise His Majesty the King to withhold his approval to the Act.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxii., 15.

‡ See (4) *Debates*, cxxvi., 55.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) I stated, in reply to a Question in this Hous on the 9th instant,† that the Official Secrets Act required no sanction from the Secretary of State for India, or, I might have added, from His Majesty's Government, and that it had already become law. I also stated that as soon as I should receive an authentic copy of the Act I would lay it upon the Table. This I propose to do; and in the meantime I can make no final statement with regard to it.

Construction of New College of Science in Dublin—Irish Materials.

MR. CLANCY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will take care that, in the construction of the new College of Science in Dublin, Irish materials will be used as far as possible, and that, in especial, those persons in Ireland who are engaged in working quarries will have a full opportunity of tendering for contracts for stone.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The designs have not yet been settled, but every consideration will be given to the suggestion in the Question. The foundation stone, I may observe, will be Newry granite.

Mitchelstown and Kildorrery Petty Sessions District.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork County, N.E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he would now consider the desirability of dividing Mitchelstown and Kildorrery into separate petty sessions districts, as Mr. Browne, clerk to the magistrates, has resigned, and such a division would remove the inconvenience at present experienced by the inhabitants of the Kildorrery district.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The reported resignation of the clerk of petty sessions has not been received. In the event of a vacancy it will be competent to the magistrates to elect different persons to the position of clerk in each district.

Alleged Failure to arrest a Lunatic in Ireland.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, on the 17th instant, Head Constable O'Hare of the Royal Irish Constabulary, refused on receipt of sworn information to put a lunatic under arrest, and that the man was permitted to be at large eight hours after his wife had given sworn information; and, if so, will he say what action, if any, does he intend taking in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) On the 17th instant the magistrate to whom application for a committal warrant had been made by the man's wife declined to issue same; but on the following day the requisite medical certificate was given and the man was committed to an asylum. He was detained overnight in the police barrack, and the action of the head constable was considerate.

Royal Irish Constabulary—Officers over Sixty Years of Age.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state the number of superior officers, county inspectors, serving in the Royal Irish Constabulary, who have reached the age of sixty and are entitled to pension; under what circumstances is their service retained; and will he, in the interest of the public service, cause inquiries to be made, with a view to their compulsory retirement.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) Four county inspectors. They have not yet completed the pensionable period of service entitling them to full retiring allowance, and the Inspector-General is not aware of any reason why they should at present retire.

Public Attendance at Strabane Workhouse Services.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Roman Catholic chaplain of Strabane workhouse conducts mass every Sunday morning at the workhouse, to which services the outside public are admitted, and on special occasions preventing many of the inmates from gaining admission; if so, will he say whether such action is in accordance with the Poor Law regulation; and, if not, will he take steps to prevent the workhouse from being used as a place of worship by the outside public.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxxi., 573.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) A complaint has been made by inmates of the workhouse to the effect stated in the first part of the Question. It has been referred to the guardians for their consideration. The regulations do not prohibit the attendance of the public at services in the workhouse chapel; at the same time they do not contemplate any interference with the discipline and management of the workhouse.

Limerick and Kerry Railway Company—Delay in Payment to Shareholders.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state what is the cause of delay in the payment to the shareholders of 4 per cent. debenture stock in the matter of the Limerick and Kerry Railway Company, in liquidation.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The Government has no information in this matter.

Gun Licences in Ireland—Case of Mr. M. C. Kenny.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether a man named M. C. Kenny has recently, in Milltown Malbay, been allowed by the police to be in possession of a gun without having a licence, and whether on a former occasion he discharged this gun on the public road; and whether attention will be called to this matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) Kenny is duly licensed to carry a gun. On the 18th June last † I answered a Question put by the hon. Member in respect to the particular incident mentioned.

Extra Police Drafted into Sligo and Armagh.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland from what places the extra police were drafted into the county Sligo, the cost of which was recently remitted by His Excellency; and if he would also state from what places the extra police were drafted into the county of Armagh, the costs of which are now in dispute.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) In both cases the additional police were drafted into Sligo and Armagh, respectively, from other counties. In the former, however, the claim made upon the county council was in respect of a reserve force of Constabulary, and when it subsequently transpired that the additional men had not been drawn from the reserve which is located by statute at the depôt in Dublin, the Government was advised that there was no legal power to recover the claim. In the case of the extra police drafted into Armagh, the circumstances were not the same. There the men were on ordinary detachment duty, employed under different statutory authority and the decision of the Government in the Sligo case is not applicable.

Army Clothing Contracts—London and Provincial Firms.

MR. WHITLEY (Halifax): To ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office what proportions of the orders for Army clothing have been placed with London and provincial firms, respectively, for the current year and for last year.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster.*) Last year orders for rather more than half the garments contracted for were secured by London firms, and this year nearly two-fifths. Owing to the completion of reserve stocks this year's orders are much smaller than last year's.

Officers' Gratuities—Case of Major Silverthorne.

SIR CARNE RASCH (Essex, Chelmsford): To ask the Secretary of State for War why the gratuity which Major Silverthorne, Royal Garrison Battalion, elected to take in lieu of pension, while serving with the 4th Royal Garrison Regiment at Malta, was stopped during his absence on leave in England; on what ground is it ruled than an officer of Reserve serving abroad is only entitled to a gratuity of £50 per annum *pro rata* while on leave at home, as a Reserve officer serving abroad receives a gratuity at the rate of £100.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxiii., 1317.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster.*) Only actual service abroad entitles an officer to the higher grant of £100, and ordinary leave is held to form part of such service. This officer, however, was on leave at home for a period of five months prior to resignation, and therefore is only entitled to the lower gratuity of £50.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

War Office Reconstitution Committee.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will publish the terms of reference to the War Office Reconstitution Committee.

The PRIME MINISTER and FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): I gave the terms on Tuesday in answer to a Question by another hon. Member.†

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE asked if the terms then stated covered the whole terms.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes.

War Office Contracts and Fair Wages Clause.

Mr. BELL (Derby): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that Messrs. Miskin, Limited, contractors to the War Office for the work being done at Purfleet Garrison, are not paying the painters employed by them the recognised rate of wages in the district—viz., 7½d. per hour, but only 7d. per hour; and whether he will see that the Fair Wages Clause is applied in this case and all future contracts.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the WAR OFFICE (Mr. Bromley Davenport, Cheshire, Macclesfield): It appears on inquiry that only one painter is now employed by Messrs. Miskin on War Department work and that he is receiving 7½d. per hour. It is not possible to ascertain what rate was paid to others recently employed, as they have now dispersed.

Transvaal Labour Ordinance—Recruiting in China.

Dr. MACNAMARA (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will state whether the persons who have been at Tien-tsin for some weeks past recruiting coolies for the Transvaal have been licensed under Regulation I. (Recruiting) of the Regulations under the Ordinance, as set forth at page 3 of the Parliamentary Paper issued on Monday last; and, if so, by whom, and to whom, such licence or licences were issued.

*The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. Lyttelton, Warwick and Leamington): No recruiting licence has yet been issued under the Regulations.

Dr. MACNAMARA: Is it not a fact that two gentlemen from the Transvaal have been recruiting in China? I desire to know under what authority Messrs. Hamilton and Perry have been acting, as stated in my Question, since 22nd February.

*Mr. LYTTELTON: I do not know that I can answer the Question more clearly than I have answered it. If the hon. Member chooses to recruit or to take preliminary steps for recruiting he can do so. Anybody can recruit Chinese in China and will be beyond our jurisdiction and control. Of course, when it comes to taking Chinese into the Transvaal, then no doubt any Chinese not recruited in pursuance of the Ordinance will be rejected, and have to be taken back at the recruiter's expense.

Dr. MACNAMARA: Will the Chinese who have been recruited be introduced under the Ordinance.

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† See page 403.

*Mr. LYTTELTON: I do not know whether there have been any.

Dr. MACNAMARA: It is a fact there have.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): The right hon. Gentleman said that an Englishman recruiting Chinese would be "beyond our jurisdiction and control." Would he not be punishable by us, we having extra-territoriality?

Mr. LYTTELTON required notice of the Question.

Dr. MACNAMARA: Can we have an assurance that Chinese already recruited will not be introduced under the Ordinance until proper officials have been appointed.

[No answer was returned.]

Treatment of Coolie Children in the Transvaal.

Dr. MACNAMARA: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will state what regulations are to be proposed for the treatment of the children of coolies in the Transvaal on reaching sixteen years of age.

*Mr. LYTTELTON: No regulations appear to be necessary seeing that no children over ten will be introduced and the labourer cannot remain for more than six years.

Crown Agents Accounts.

Mr. BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will lay upon the Table of the House the last accounts of the Crown Agents for the Colonies, as audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General, an abstract of which is rendered to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

*Mr. LYTTELTON: The last abstracts of the Crown Agents Office Fund and Office Reserve Fund Accounts which have been audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General are those for 1902. I will lay copies of these accounts on the Table of the House as soon as they can be prepared.

Negotiations with the Chinese Government for Labour for the Transvaal.

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the negotiations with the Chinese Government relative to the enlistment of labourers for the Transvaal are now completed; and when he will be able to present Papers on the subject.

*Mr. LYTTELTON: No, Sir. I cannot at present fix a date for Papers.

Mortality among Kaffirs in Witwatersrand Mines.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any communications have passed between the High Commissioner and the owners of the Witwatersrand gold mines as to the grievous mortality among the Kaffirs working underground; and whether he will lay Papers on the subject upon the Table.

*Mr. LYTTELTON: I am in communication with Lord Milner on this subject, to the importance of which he is fully alive. I am not in a position to lay Papers at present.

Pacific Island Labourers Act.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will inform the House if the Pacific Island Labourers Act, 1901, of the Commonwealth of Australia, prohibits the entry into Australia of any Pacific Islander after 31st March, 1904, and enacts the deportation from Australia of Pacific Islanders from there after 31st December, 1906.

*Mr. LYTTELTON: The Act in question prohibits the entry into Australia of any Pacific Island labourer after 31st March, 1904, and gives power to the Minister for External Affairs to order the deportation of any Pacific Island labourer found in Australia after the 31st December, 1906.

Mr JOHN ELLIS asked whether that answer was consistent with the right hon. Gentleman's statement on Monday night.

*Mr. LYTTELTON: I stated that the Acts to which I referred have not been repealed. Those Acts were alleged to authorise slavery. I still think it is entirely inconsistent with that allegation that the Commonwealth of Australia should keep those Acts in operation from 1901 to 1906.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS said his statement was that the system had been put an end to.

Western Australia—Power to Flog Natives.

Mr. OSMOND WILLIAMS (Merionethshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will state for what offences a justice of the peace in Western Australia can sentence a native, serving under a white man, to be flogged and to two years imprisonment.

*Mr. LYTTELTON: Under certain Acts of Western Australia known as the Aboriginal Offenders Acts, 1883, 1892, and 1893, a justice of the peace had power to order the whipping of an aboriginal native for certain offences when no other justice of the peace within twenty miles could be obtained to constitute a Court of two justices, but these Acts were repealed by the Criminal Code Act of Western Australia, 1902, and so far as I am aware the provisions of the repealed Acts have not been re-enacted.

India and the South African Garrison.

Mr. EUGENE WASON (Clackmannan and Kinross): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he will say whether the Council of India were unanimous in approval of the proposal in June last to charge the revenue of India with the cost of a large portion of the British troops then intended to be stationed in South Africa as part of its permanent garrison; and, if not, can copies of any opinion or dissent, with reasons for such dissent recorded by any members of the Council on that occasion, be placed before Parliament, as provided for in Section 23 of the Government of India Act of 1858, together with the Secretary of State's opinion and his reasons for such approval as provided for in the same section.

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford): The Council of India were not unanimous in approval of the proposal that India should, on certain conditions, contribute towards the maintenance of a garrison force in South Africa. Two members of Council recorded dissents under Section 23 of the Government of India Act, 1858. The section also gives power to the Secretary of State to require that his opinion, and the reasons for the same, shall be entered on the Minutes; but my predecessor did not exercise this power on the occasion to which the Question refers. The Question not now being before us and the proposal having been dropped, I do not propose to lay Papers.

Brussels Sugar Convention—Meeting of the Permanent Commission.

Mr. LOUGH (Islington, W.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Permanent Commission of the Brussels Sugar Convention has met, as was expected last week; and whether they have arrived at any decision with regard to the question whether the limitation of the surtax provided in Article III. applies to sugared goods; and what steps His Majesty's Government have taken in the matter.

The UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Earl Percy, Kensington, S.): The Permanent Commission met on the 10th inst. The question whether the limitation of the surtax provided in Article III. applies to sugared goods was not before the Commission, having been decided in the negative at the previous meeting. The discussion on the question whether a surtax of an amount sufficient to give rise to a bounty is allowable in the case of sugared goods has been adjourned until the next meeting of the Commission on the 10th of November next, in order to allow time for the collection by the Bureau of information and statistics from the different countries, which are necessary to enable the Commission to arrive at a decision.

Mr. LOUGH: But has not the House been promised that this question of sugared goods should be brought before the Permanent Commission and settled in March ?

Earl PERCY : We could not possibly promise it should be settled. I have stated the steps that are being taken and the reasons for them.

Canton River—Obstructions to Navigation.

Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) : I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, having regard to the fact that a clause was introduced into the treaty negotiated with the Chinese Government in 1902, under which that Government undertook to remove within the space of two years the artificial obstructions to navigation in the Canton River, will he state whether any steps have yet been taken by the Chinese with a view to the removal of these obstructions.

Earl PERCY : His Majesty's Consul-General at Canton reported on 5th October last, that the Viceroy had instructed the Hoppo to immediately request the Commissioner of Customs to take the necessary steps for carrying out the provisions of the treaty ; and a preliminary survey of the harbour has been made by a Chinese revenue cutter with a view to the removal of obstructions. His Majesty's Government have received no further report.

Mr. WEIR : Will the noble Lord make further inquiries ? It is not in the harbour of Canton that the obstruction exists, but it is half-way between Canton and Hong-Kong, where there is a most serious obstruction.

Earl PERCY : My answer deals with the obstructions which the Chinese Government is pledged to remove.

Dentistry in British East Africa and Uganda.

Mr. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland) : I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he is aware that throughout the Protectorates of East Africa and Uganda there is no qualified practising dentist ; and if he will take into consideration the desirability of offering a free passage there to a suitable practitioner.

Earl PERCY : I am not aware that there are any private practitioners in the Protectorates, but I understand that a dentist recently visited them, and there is at least one member of the medical staff who has a practical knowledge of dentistry. We have received no complaints or suggestions on the subject from His Majesty's Commissioners.

Factory Inspection—Chief Inspector's Report.

Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department at what date in the present session the Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops will be in the hands of Members.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Cochrane, Ayrshire, N.): The preparation of this Report involves heavy personal labour for the Chief Inspector. Important though it is, it cannot be done at the expense of other matters requiring his attention, upon which there are just now particularly urgent demands, especially in connection with the inquiry into the draft regulations for Docks. He will, however, endeavour—though it is impossible to make any promise, to have the Report ready by about the same date as last year, *i.e.*, early in June.

The Budget.

*Mr. McCRAE (Edinburgh, E.) : I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can state whether the Budget will be introduced on an early day after the Easter Vacation.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.) : Yes, Sir.

*Mr. McCRAE : Can the right hon. Gentleman name the date ?

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN : No, Sir.

Reduction of the War Debt.

*Mr. McCRAE : I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can state whether the Exchequer Balances as at 1st April, 1902, included a sum of £4,029,000, the unexpended balance of the £60,000,000 Consol Loan of 1901 issued to meet war expenditure, and whether it is now proposed to apply a sum of £4,000,000 out of the present balances in reduction of war indebtedness.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The hon. Member has only taken one year. If he had taken the whole war period, the amount borrowed in excess would have been less than he states. I do not propose to anticipate any information which seems properly to belong to my Budget statement.

*MR. McCRAE: Is it not the case that in 1902 there was £4,000,000 of borrowed money in the Exchequer which is still there?

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I have answered the Question, and that answer gives a more accurate view of the facts than is put forward in the Question. You must await the Budget speech for further information.

Customs Regulations for Re-Export of Foreign Goods.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, seeing that re-exporters of foreign goods which have been imported into the United Kingdom are now required to furnish to the Board of Customs particulars of the countries from which those goods were originally consigned, he will say whether any remonstrances against this measure, on the ground that it involves the disclosure of trade secrets has been received by himself or by the President of the Board of Trade from chambers of commerce or from others; and, if so, will he say whether he will withdraw this order.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The name of the country whence the goods were originally consigned is required to be furnished in the case of all goods imported into the United Kingdom and of all such goods which are subsequently exported. This requirement was brought into operation on 1st January last, at the request of the Manchester and other chambers of commerce, and no difficulty appears to be experienced by the majority of traders in complying with it. Remonstrances have been received by the Customs from a few firms only, and arrangements are now being made whereby traders who buy foreign goods and sell them to other firms for export may communicate direct to that department the required information as to the countries whence the goods were originally consigned, and thus obviate disclosure of the particulars to their customers. Such information is for statistical purposes only and is treated as confidential.

Licence Duties.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, before proposing to continue or extend the existing taxation on commodities used by the poorer classes in this country, he will cause an inquiry to be made into the duties on publicans' licences, with a view of making them more nearly equivalent to the monopoly value of such licences.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I do not think that any further inquiry into this matter is required.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: I beg to give notice that I will call attention to the gross inadequacy and unfairness of the existing scale of licensing duties.

Clerks to Surveyors of Taxes.

MR. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Government or the Board of Inland Revenue have at present in contemplation any scheme for the improvement of the position of the clerks to the surveyors of taxes; and whether, if any such scheme is in contemplation, he could state the nature of it and what class of clerk it affects.

*THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY (MR. VICTOR CAVENDISH, Derbyshire, W.): No further changes in the position of the clerks to surveyors of taxes are contemplated at present.

National Telephone Company—Government Right of Purchase.

MR. LOUGH: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is empowered, under the licence granted to the National Telephone Company, to take possession of that company's system on the 31st of December, 1904, by giving six months notice from June next; and whether any negotiations are proceeding between the Post Office and the Company with a view to exercising this option.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, Westhoughton): The Postmaster-General has power, under the licence granted to the National Telephone Company, to purchase the company's business on 31st December, 1904, by giving six months notice, the price being settled, in case of difference, by arbitration. I am considering whether steps should be initiated, under this power or otherwise, for taking over the Company's system, and some preliminary discussion has taken place with the Company. I am prepared to undertake that the House shall, by Select Committee or otherwise, have an opportunity of considering any proposed agreement with the Company before it becomes binding.

Pay in the Post Office.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he can state what regulations, if any, exist concerning deferred and arrested increments of pay; whether an arrest of increment for one, two, or three years is irrecoverable under any circumstances; whether it involves a loss of seniority on pay and holiday sheets; and whether such regulations as exist apply equally to barrier increments and to all classes of Post Office servants.

LORD STANLEY: The regulations respecting the allowance of ordinary annual increments to civil servants are contained in the Order in Council of the 29th of November, 1898. In paragraph 20 of that order it is prescribed that no increment can be allowed to an officer unless a certificate can be furnished by his immediate superior officer that during the preceding year his conduct has been approved; and that if such certificate cannot be given when the increment falls due the grant may be deferred until the officer shall have completed a continuous period of twelve months approved service, when the increment will become payable from the date of such certificate. It is also laid down that if the officer's conduct shall continue satisfactory the head of the Department may, after a certain interval, and subject to the consent of the Treasury, increase the officer's salary to an amount not exceeding that at which it would have stood if no increment had been withheld. These regulations apply to all civil servants. The deferment of an ordinary increment does not affect an officer's seniority in any way. As regards the classes in the Post Office where an efficiency bar exists in the scale of pay, an increment which would carry an officer over the bar can be allowed only on a certificate from the superior officer that the officer is fully qualified to perform the highest duties of his class.

Taff Vale Railway.

MR. BELL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he proposes at an early date to issue a rule requiring the use of brake vans behind trains running between Penarth Junction and Penarth Dock on the Taff Vale Railway.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): The hon. Member's Question appears to be based on a misapprehension. A rule already exists requiring brake vans or other suitable vehicles to be provided on all trains working upon running lines beyond station limits. The Taff Vale Railway Company have applied for an exemption from this Rule for portions of their line, including the section mentioned by the hon. Member, and the Railway and Canal Commissioners to whom the application was referred have held that the company is entitled to some exemption. A draft Rule giving effect to the views of the Commissioners is being prepared and will shortly be published.

Grants for Training of Pupil Teachers.

DR. MACNAMARA: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Education when the additional grants promised for the training of pupil teachers will come into operation.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Sir WILLIAM ANSON, Oxford University): The additional grant will first be payable for the period commencing on 1st August, 1904.

Education Code.

DR. MACNAMARA: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether he can say when the Education Code for 1904–5 will be laid.

SIR WILLIAM ANSON: I hope the Code for 1904–5 will be laid shortly after Easter.

Vaccination Exemption Certificates.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will state how many certificates of exemption from vaccination were granted during the year ending 31st December, 1903.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. WALTER LONG, Bristol, S.): The Returns made to me show the number of certificates of conscientious objection received by the vaccination officers during each year, and this number may be taken as substantially agreeing with the number granted during the year. The Returns for the year 1903 are not quite complete, but the number of certificates of the kind referred to received during the year may be stated approximately as 37,200.

Scottish Education—Aid Grant.

MR. BLACK (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been called to the fact that the method adopted by the Government of distributing the aid grant to schools in Scotland, being the compensatory sum paid to Scotland in respect of the additional grant made last year to English schools, has resulted in Episcopal schools receiving out of that grant a sum equivalent to nearly four times the amount per pupil in average attendance and per teacher employed as compared with what is paid in respect of public schools and Roman Catholic schools; whether this result was foreseen by the Government when this method was adopted by them; and whether a more equitable method of distribution will now be adopted.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): The general aid grant was distributed under the Minute submitted to Parliament, the conditions of which are absolutely uniform for all classes of schools. The insinuation contained in the hon. Member's Question as to a scheme on the part of the Government to secure a distribution in favour of one particular section of schools is quite unwarranted, and his figures are only brought out by confusing the expenditure under the two branches of the Minute, which have no relation to each other, and then dividing by the numbers of children in average attendance, which is an arithmetical operation of no significance. Under the first section of the Minute, which dealt with special payments to small schools in respect of extra teachers, the public schools received £13,100, the Episcopal schools received £300, while the Roman Catholic schools received £220. The reason of this was that, although a larger number of Roman Catholic schools were eligible, a smaller proportion of these schools fulfilled the conditions as to staff. The great bulk of the grant is paid under Section 2 and is *per capita*, and of this the Roman Catholic schools received £8,590 while the Episcopal schools received only £1,512. The whole subject of the aid grant, as of all funds devoted to education, will be dealt with in the Bill which I hope to introduce next week.

MR. BLACK: I shall call attention to this matter later in the day.

Killarney Roads.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a necessity exists for the construction of a road in the electoral division of Maum, near Killarney; and whether, in view of the fact that in April, 1903, its construction was agreed to by the rural district council, can he say what obstacle prevented its being completed.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): The road referred to cannot be identified from the description given in the Question, but if the hon. Member will write to me I will inquire further.

Portmagee Petty Sessions Clerk.

MR. BOLAND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in the recent appointment of petty sessions clerk in the district of Portmagee, county Kerry, which is a purely Irish-speaking district, care was taken to select a man who knew the Irish language.

MR. WYNDHAM: All the people in this district, with a few exceptions, speak Irish and English. The petty sessions clerk was not required to have a knowledge of Irish. No inconvenience has been caused at any time. An interpreter is always present in the Petty Sessions Court, but his services have been seldom utilised.

Longford Police Lock-Up.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): On behalf of the hon. Member for North Longford, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state what has been the result of his inquiries into the sanitary condition of the lock-up for prisoners in the Royal Irish Constabulary barracks at Longford.

MR. WYNDHAM: Negotiations are proceeding with the landlord of the premises. The matter, it is hoped, will soon be arranged.

Granard Union Workhouse Master.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL: On behalf of the hon. Member for North Longford I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state on what grounds the Local Government Board for Ireland have refused to sanction the recently appointed master of Granard Union; whether, in the case of the appointment of Mr. Leamy by the Local Government Board, no sureties were asked from him by the Local Government Board of any kind; and, if so, will he explain why a different rule is now applied in the case of a master elected by the representatives of the people.

MR. WYNDHAM: The Board has not refused to sanction the recent appointment. The person elected is undergoing a course of training at another workhouse, and his fitness for the position will shortly be reported upon. It was the guardians who failed to require the late master to furnish sureties.

Cusack Estate, County Longford.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL: On behalf of the hon. Member for North Longford I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state if any negotiations have been entered into by the Estates Commissioners for the purchase, with a view to resale to the tenants, of the Cusack Estate, in townland of Knocka-Tarry, county Longford; and, if not, whether, as negotiations for the purchase of this estate have been begun on both sides, he would recommend the Commissioners to offer their services towards a speedy completion of same.

MR. WYNDHAM: The matter is in the same position as when I replied to the hon. Member's previous Question of the 3rd instant.†

Eyrecourt Convent School.

MR. ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the cause of the delay in issuing the new plans for building Irish national schools; whether he is aware that inconvenience is caused in Eyrecourt Convent by this delay; and whether steps will be immediately taken so as to enable the managers to have this necessary work proceeded with at once.

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† See *Debates*, cxxxi., 69.

MR. WYNDHAM: I have nothing to add to my reply to the hon. Member's similar Question of the 15th instant.

MR. ROCHE: What was the answer?

MR. WYNDHAM: The matter is under consideration and no decision has yet been arrived at.

Blessington Steam Trams.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of persons killed, and the number injured, by the steam trams from Terenure, Dublin to Blessington, since the trams commenced to run over that line; also how many animals were killed, and how many injured, during the same period; the damage done to property situated on either side of the line by sparks from engines and other causes attributable to the service; and what was the total amount of compensation paid to claimants.

MR. WYNDHAM: Fifteen persons were killed and four injured. Thirty-nine animals were killed. There were fourteen cases of burning. Compensation to the amount of £1,100 has been paid to claimants.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR: In view of the large number of accidents on this line, will the right hon. Gentleman order some inquiry?

MR. WYNDHAM: I should like to have notice of that Question.

Care of Harmless Imbeciles in Ireland.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the success of the system of family care of harmless imbeciles on the Continent and in Scotland, he will introduce a Bill to legalise family care in Ireland of such persons.

MR. WYNDHAM: I replied on the 11th February last to a similar Question put by the hon. Member for St. Patrick's Division.†

Defaulting Contractors.

MR. P. J. O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he has received a communication from the County Council of North Tipperary drawing his attention to the present state of the law, debarring county surveyors from immediately dealing with defaulting contractors, inasmuch as the county surveyor must wait for a general meeting of the county council to enable him to serve a ten days' notice, whereas, under the Grand Jury Act, the then county surveyors were entitled to serve such notices at their own discretion; and if he will consider the recommendation of the county council to have the law amended by restoring the former practice.

MR. WYNDHAM: Yes, Sir. The suggested change in the law is desirable, and will be dealt with when a suitable opportunity arises.

Mullawornia Evicted Tenant.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL: On behalf of the hon. Member for North Longford I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland on what grounds the application of Francis Yorke, of Mullawornia, county Longford, for restoration as an evicted tenant, has been rejected by the Estates Commissioners.

MR. WYNDHAM: The eviction took place in 1872, and the case, consequently, is outside the scope of Section 2 (d) of the Act of last year.

Marlborough Street Training College.

MR. BOLAND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will grant the two Returns relative to the Marlborough Street Training College, standing on to-day's Paper.

MR. WYNDHAM: The Returns will be prepared and communicated to the hon. Member. I hardly think they are of sufficient importance to lay on the Table as Parliamentary Papers.

The Returns are as follows:—

Marlborough Street Training College (Roman Catholic Students): Return showing the number of Roman Catholic students who completed a two years course of training in Marlborough Street Training College in each year from 1893 to 1903 both inclusive, and the number of Roman Catholics so trained for two years in Marlborough Street Training College who on the conclusion of their course of training were employed as principal or assistant teachers in National schools in Ireland in each year from 1893 to 1903 both inclusive; the figures to distinguish in each case between those who obtained permanent employment and those who were engaged only as substitutes in a temporary way.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxix., 1015.

Marlborough Street Training College (Students trained): Return showing the number of students who completed a two years course of training in Marlborough Street Training College in each year from 1893 to 1903 both inclusive; the number of students so trained for two years in Marlborough Street Training College who, on the conclusion of their course of training, were employed as principal or assistant teachers in National schools in Ireland in each year from 1893 to 1903, both inclusive. The figures to distinguish in each case between those who obtained permanent employment and those who were engaged only as substitutes in a temporary way.

Irish Auditor's Surcharges.

MR. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Mr. Ellis, Local Government auditor, has surcharged the Urban Council of Tipperary in sums of £37, £53, and £69 16s. 1d. in respect of a building contract and arrears of rates; that the councillors so surcharged took proceedings by certiorari to have them set aside; that the Court of King's Bench decided the auditor had no jurisdiction to make such surcharges; that he exceeded his duty in the matter, and set them aside; that the ratepayers are held to be liable not only for their own costs but the costs of the auditor as well; and whether, under the circumstances, the auditor being an official of the Local Government Board, provision will be made to indemnify the ratepayers against the costs incurred in quashing these illegal surcharges.

MR. WYNDHAM: The facts are correctly stated. The persons aggrieved by the surcharges sought redress in the Court of King's Bench and did not appeal to the Local Government Board. The Court did not award the appellants their costs and they must abide by the decision of the Court. The Board has no power to remit the costs, as suggested.

MR. CULLINAN: Is not the Local Government Board responsible for the acts of the auditors?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Do I understand the council did not appeal in the first case to the Local Government Board?

MR. WYNDHAM: That is so.

MR. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that this auditor has been surcharging people all over Ireland?

[No answer was returned.]

Dog Poisoning in County Down.

MR. WOOD (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if complaint has been made of the destruction of dogs by poisoning in Ballynahinch, county Down; whether any of the offenders have been discovered; and if any and what prosecutions have been instituted.

MR. WYNDHAM: Complaint has been made. The police have instituted careful inquiries, but have not detected the offenders. The matter is receiving their special attention.

Ballindine Police Barracks.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL: On behalf of the hon. Member for South Mayo I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether Lord Oranmore is the landlord of the police barracks in Ballindine, county Mayo; whether, for a number of years, the police authorities were regularly paying him a yearly rent; whether he has demanded an increase of nearly 50 per cent., and that, as a protest, the police are about leaving; and, if so, whether he will see that they will not be allowed to go into a house from which another tenant was evicted until after the introduction of the promised legislation for tenants in towns.

MR. WYNDHAM: The landlord has asked for an increased rent for the barrack. It has not been decided that the police shall leave the existing barrack, but inquiries are being made with a view to ascertain what other suitable houses are available. The concluding inquiry is also raised in a subsequent Question.

Quilka Farm, County Cavan.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL: On behalf on the hon. Member for South Mayo I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a farm of land, known as the Quilka Farm, in the townland of Quilka, county Cavan, is at present in the Land Judge's Court; that it has been advertised for letting for a period of seven years, with the right to purchase; and that the farm had been in the landlord's hands; and, if so, whether, seeing that there are a number of tenants in the neighbourhood with poor and small holdings, he will give instructions to the Estates Commissioners to purchase this grazing farm for the purpose of enlarging the holdings of the other tenants.

MR. WYNDHAM: There is some difficulty in identifying the farm referred to from the information given in the Question. Further inquiry is being made, and perhaps the hon. Member will repeat the Question on Monday.

Ballinrobe Perjury Charge.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL: On behalf of the hon. Member for South Mayo I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the expenses in connection with the trial of the two policemen who are charged with committing perjury at Ballinrobe about the 2nd of February last, must be borne by themselves or by the public; whether these policemen will be put forward at the next assizes in Mayo; and, if not, when will steps be taken to remove from the force entrusted with the protection of the lives and properties of the people, members who lay themselves open to such charges.

I also beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the two policemen stationed at Ballinrobe, county Mayo, against whom the Attorney-General for Ireland has instituted a prosecution for perjury, are still doing ordinary duty in Ballinrobe, and that they have not been interfered with by their authorities since the Crown decided on prosecuting them; and, if so, will he say whether it is his intention to have them immediately arrested or bound over to appear when necessary, or at least to remove them from the police force until the charge against them is either proved or their acquittal obtained from a jury of their countrymen.

MR. WYNDHAM: The two constables were suspended on the 14th instant. The procedure, in accordance with the ordinary practice in such cases, will be by summons. The accused must in the first instance bear the costs of their defence. Whether the Crown will ultimately contribute to the expense will depend on the issue of the trial. The other portions of the Questions seem to assume the guilt of the accused and anticipate the decision of the justices, I must decline to answer them.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.): Will you take steps to see that these two men do not fly from justice?

[No answer was returned.]

Subsequently MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL asked a Question of which notice had been sent to the Chief Secretary.

*MR. SPEAKER: It can only be asked if it deals with an urgent matter of public importance.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL: It does that.

The hon. Member then proceeded to ask the Question, which had reference to the nature of the evidence to be called, and inquired why certain magistrates had not been summoned.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: Order, order! That obviously is a Question of which notice must be given.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): In order to show the urgency of the matter, may I point out that the case is to be heard next Monday and we have no opportunity of putting a Question before then, unless we do it to-day.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: I must confess that the matter, although it may arouse great interest in the locality, does not seem to me to amount to one of urgent public importance.

Ballindine Police Barracks.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL: On behalf of the hon. Member for South Mayo I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the action of the police in Ballindine, county Mayo, in urging on the landlord of a house in that town the desirability of evicting a tenant named Carey, with a view to turning it into a police barrack; whether he is aware that Carey had been in possession of the house for over thirty years, that he had paid in rent over £400, that he was evicted although he had paid his rent and was willing to continue paying it; and, if so, whether he will see that the police authorities will not be allowed to carry into effect the eviction of this man.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The statement in the first part of the Question is without foundation. Carey was evicted from the house two years ago, but under what circumstances I am unable to say. It has since been occupied by the owner, and inquiries are being made as to its suitability for a police barrack.

Irish College of Science Staff.

Mr. NANNETTI: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland when it is intended to place the staff of the School of Art, College of Science, and Museums in Ireland on the settled terms of wages already granted to the attendants of the English and Scotch Museums, and also granted to the attendants of the National Library in Dublin.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The matter is under the consideration of the new Department. Detailed inquiries are being made, and it will be some time before a decision can be arrived at.

Annaly Estate, Longford.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL: On behalf of the hon. Member for North Longford: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to state whether he is aware that, on 1st June, 1901, Patrick Farrell, of Lismacmanus, county Longford, was informed by Mr. J. M. Ross Todd, solicitor for the receiver of the Annaly Estate, county Longford, that the Land Commission had sanctioned the advance for the purchase of his holdings at Lismacmanus and Carrownphull; and whether he can state the cause of the delay in the issue of the vesting order in this man's case.

Mr. WYNDHAM: This question has been referred to the Land Judge's Court, but so far I have not received a report on the statements in question. I regret, therefore, to have to ask the hon. Member to again postpone the Question.

Irish Agricultural Department Clerks.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that certain clerks in the Irish Agricultural Department who have up to twelve years service, and whose salaries are approximately £90 a year, were recently notified, in response to an application for advancement, that such application could not be entertained in view of an intimation from the Treasury in February, 1903, to the effect that the time had come when the recurrent applications should cease, and the sanctioned scales should be left to their operation; will he state whether the communication conveying this refusal was brought under the notice of the secretary; and will he say whether the Treasury intimation referred to relates only to the clerks mentioned; and, if not, whether he can explain why, while refusing to submit to the Treasury the application of the latter, recurrent applications have since been made for increases in the salaries of better paid officials of the Department; and whether he will see that such interpretations are not put upon Treasury communications as may act to the detriment of any of the Department's employees.

MR. WYNDHAM: The clerks referred to in the first part of the Question were employed in a temporary capacity only before their appointment, within the past few years, to the permanent establishment. In the former capacity their services were determinable at a week's notice and they had no prospects of advancement. They are now pensionable officers, and their promotion carried with it other substantial advantages. The Department considered their further application, but felt unable to recommend it to the Treasury. The decision arrived at was the decision of the Department, and it would be entirely subversive of official discipline to discuss the grounds upon which it was come to, or admit or deny that it was brought to the notice of the secretary. The Department must use its own discretion as to the communications it may make to the Treasury on behalf of members of the staff. Each case is dealt with on its merits, and there is no foundation for the suggestion that it acts to the detriment of any of its employees.

Irish Sub-Postmasters.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he will say how may sub-postmasters are employed in Ireland; what are their hours of duty; what salaries and commissions do they receive; what rental allowance do they get every year; what are their prospects of promotion to higher branches of the service; what is the proportion of the total post office revenue earned by sub-postmasters; and whether he intends to take any steps to improve the position of this body of public servants.

*LORD STANLEY: There are about 2,680 county and 205 town sub-offices in Ireland. The former are usually open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., and the latter from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The salaries and value of the commissions vary according to the business done. No special allowance in aid of rent is given under the ordinary circumstances. Sub-postmasters are not as a rule qualified for advancement to higher branches of the service, but occasionally they obtain promotion to postmasterships. I am unable to say what proportion of the total post office revenue is derived from sub-offices. I have recently obtained Treasury sanction for improving, in certain directions, the remunerations of sub-postmasters, especially at the smaller offices, and instructions are being issued upon the subject.

Nenagh Postman's Pension.

MR. P. J. O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he has received a communication from the board of guardians of Nenagh Union with reference to the case of a man named Edward Doheny, formerly a postman at Nenagh, who became insane and was committed to Clonmel Lunatic Asylum, being awarded a pension of 8s. per week; whether a deduction of 4s. per week has been made by his Department on the grounds that the Government make a contribution towards the maintenance of pauper lunatics; and, if so, whether, having regard to the circumstances of this case, that Doheny has left a delicate wife and a family of nine helpless children, he will allow the full pension of 8s. per week, and not leave them a burden on the ratepayers to the extent of 5s. per week out-door relief.

LORD STANLEY: The communication referred to by the hon. Member has been received from the board of guardians of the Nenagh Union, and it is the fact that a deduction of 4s. a week is made from the pension of Edward Doheny, late postman at Nenagh. The deduction is rendered necessary by the provisions of the Superannuation Act, 1887, and I regret that, in these circumstances, it is not possible to pay the pension in full to Mrs. Doheny.

Stamp Office for Edgeworthstown.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether, for the benefit and advantage of the public in Edgeworthstown, he will direct that an office for the sale of Inland Revenue and other stamps be opened in that town.

Lord STANLEY: I will inquire and give the hon. Member an answer as soon a possible.

Interest on Irish Local Loans.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL: On behalf of the hon. Member for North Longford, I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will state the grounds upon which it has been decided to increase the interest on loans to public bodies in Ireland, as outlined in a recent circular of the Local Government Board for Ireland.

Mr. VICTOR CAVENDISH: The recent increase in the rates of interest applies to all loans made out of the Local Loans Fund on the security of local rates, in Great Britain as well as in Ireland. The money required for the purpose of these loans has to be raised by the issue of Local Loans Stock; and, under present conditions, the price at which the stock can be issued would not enable the previous rates of interest to be continued without loss to the Local Loans Fund.

Irish Railways—Passenger Cars.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL: On behalf of the hon. Member for North Longford, I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in the interest of the health and comfort of passengers on the Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland, he is prepared to recommend the directors of that company to have cushioned seats supplied to their third class carriages, as is the case on all the principal railway lines in Ireland.

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: No, Sir; I am not prepared to interfere with the discretion of the railway company in this matter.

Trinity College, Dublin—Dr. Traill's Appointment.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury on whose advice was the prerogative of the Crown exercised in filling up the appointment to the Provostship of Trinity College, Dublin; and under what Vote can the advice so given be subjected to Parliamentary comment and criticism.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The responsibility rests wholly with me, and it is the privilege of the hon. Gentleman to move the reduction of my salary if he disapproves of the advice which I have given.

Captain DONELAN (Cork Co., E.): Was the appointment made in recognition of Dr. Traill's eminent services to education or was it made in recognition of his services to the Landlords' Convention.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not sure that it is a good precedent to cross-examine a Minister of the Crown as to the ground of the advice that he has given, but I may say that Dr. Traill's connection with the Landlords' Convention never entered the head either of myself or of anybody else in connection with the appointment.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: Are we entitled to assume that the appointment of Dr. Traill gives any indication of the view of the Government on University education.

[No answer was returned.]

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL indicated that he would raise the question on the Vote for the salary of the First Lord of the Treasury.

Duration of Speeches.

Sir CARNE RASCH (Essex, Chelmsford): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he is aware that twelve hon. Members occupied the time of the House for ten hours between them in the debate of Monday last; and whether he would give facilities during the course of this session for moving a Resolution on the subject of duration of speeches.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have caused the report of the debate on Monday last to be analysed, not as regards the arguments, but in reference to time occupied by speakers; and I find that the Leader of the Opposition occupied seventy-eight minutes, my right hon. friend seventy-two, and that I was guilty to the extent of fifty-three minutes, leaving 267 minutes for the remaining nine speakers, an average of half an hour each. Some of the nine speeches occupied less than half an hour, while others were very distinctly over half an hour. I can only express my regret that so few speakers were able to take part, not so much in regard to that particular debate, for it was on a subject upon which the House was engaged for several nights before, but because I admit that the length of speeches does, and must, exclude from participation in discussion a large number of Members competent to express opinions; and if each of us in his own sphere—I speak as a sinner myself, not as a saint preaching to sinners—if we could—those who have not to expound a policy or deal with a whole policy—confine ourselves to what we conceive to be novel in argument there would be a manifest advantage. I cannot, in the present state of business, promise to give my hon. and gallant friend time for the discussion of this question, and if I did promise, on the average I have just described to the House, only three speakers would be able to express their opinions.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Will the right hon. Gentleman consider whether the proper remedy is not Home Rule.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have never denied that Home Rule would get rid of some of the speeches to which we have to listen.

Cabinet Memoranda.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he has yet considered the precedents furnished to him with reference to the publication of Cabinet Memoranda; and, if so, whether he has any statement to make modifying his previous decision with regard to the publication of the Memorandum submitted by him to the Cabinet embracing propositions in favour of preferential tariffs and the taxation of food.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his courtesy in sending me a letter which he afterwards published in the newspapers. But the precedent to which he referred in that interesting communication was one in which Mr. Forster, in order to verify his statement with regard to a particular conversation alleged to have occurred with the then hon. Member for Clare, read out a Cabinet Memorandum which he had himself prepared for his colleagues. Mr. Gladstone referred to that transaction without expressing either approval or disapproval, and, without saying whether it was right or wrong, it is evidently in quite a different category from the transaction which so exercises the mind of the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS: Has the right hon. Gentleman refreshed his mind with his own speech on that occasion, on 15th May, 1882, in which he advanced some broad propositions?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I rarely read my own speeches, and I confess I have not done so on the present occasion.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL said in that speech the right hon. Gentleman highly approved of Mr. Forster's action.

Mr. Austin Dobson.

Mr. OSMOND WILLIAMS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the case of a Mr. Austin Dobson, who now receives a pension of £533 6s. 8d. in addition to the sum of £250 from the Civil List--in all £783 6s.8d. or very nearly full pay, his salary on his retirement being £800 a year; and whether he can explain why this gentleman has such a pension.

In putting the Question the hon. Member said he regretted that, owing to an inadvertence, the letter "a" had been placed before Mr. Austin Dobson's name. He had no intention of making this a personal matter. The question was levelled against the principle, or want of principle, on which these pensions were granted.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am sure the hon. Gentleman would be the last man in the House to offer a deliberate insult to one who has been a distinguished Civil servant and is a distinguished man of letters. We shall all accept his disclaimer of the letter "a" with absolute confidence. The course that has been pursued on my responsibility in this matter is one that, I believe, will have the approval of every man interested in English literature. The hon. Gentleman appears to suppose that there is some incompatibility between a Civil Service pension and Civil Service office. That is not so. Mr. Gladstone gave the late Mr. Matthew Arnold, while in full employment and not on a pension, a pension on the Civil List, and I think it was a proper course for Mr. Gladstone to pursue. In the present case, Mr. Austin Dobson, I think immediately after or immediately before this pension was offered to him, left, on grounds of health, the Board of Trade, of which he was a Civil servant. I do not suppose the hon. Gentleman means to suggest that the pension was not deserved by Mr. Austin Dobson's great literary qualifications. It would, if I may say so respectfully, be a condemnation, not of Mr. Austin Dobson, but of the hon. Gentleman's familiarity with recent contemporary English literature if he was to form an unfavourable judgment of this transaction.

Mr. OSMOND WILLIAMS asked whether this pension was intended only for men who had little or no fixed income and were doing, or had done, good literary work.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Gentleman will see, if he looks at the original statute under which the grant is given or at the actual practice of the First Lord of the Treasury, that he has not given anything like a full or accurate account of the mode in which that fund is administered. I have had great difficulty in administering it during my tenure of office, but never have I given a pension with less doubt than I gave it in the case of Mr. Austin Dobson.

Order of Questions.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL drew attention to the fact that, owing to the manner in which the Questions had been arranged, several important ones addressed to the Colonial Secretary had not been reached by five minutes to three. Was it not right that Questions of such importance should have a chance of being answered verbally? Why had the Questions to the First Lord of the Treasury been interpolated with those to the Colonial Secretary?

*Mr. SPEAKER: The arrangement was made by my direction and with the assent of the First Lord in order to comply with what I understood to be the wish of the House, that the Questions addressed to the First Lord of the Treasury should if possible not be pushed out by the time limit. I directed that those Questions should in future begin not later than fifty-one.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—THE EASTER HOLIDAYS.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): I beg to ask what will be the business of next week; when the Easter recess will commence and how long it will last, and when the Budget will be introduced.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am afraid I cannot give the House any information as to the actual date on which the Budget will be introduced, but it will not be very long after Easter. I hope the House will allow the Government to take the Committee stage of the Consolidated Fund Bill to-morrow at half-past five o'clock. It could be stopped by an objector, but no debate can in any circumstances take place, and it would be for the general convenience if this necessarily uncontroversial stage could be taken between half-past five and six. If the House will consent to that course, then I should take the Third

Reading on Monday. On Tuesday I propose to take the Motion for the adjournment for the holidays, and I see no reason why the holidays should not last until the Tuesday after Easter Tuesday. I cannot be quite sure whether I shall not have to ask the House to meet on Wednesday, but I should like to avoid that contingency if I can do so. The Scotch Education Bill will be introduced on Monday.

MR. LOUGH: What will the business be on Wednesday if the House meet.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot say.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cornwall, Camborne): When will the Licensing Bill be introduced.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Soon after Easter, I hope.

AN HON. MEMBER: Will it be before Christmas.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN (AMENDMENT) BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 139.]

NEW BILLS.

STEAM ENGINES AND BOILERS (PERSONS IN CHARGE) BILL.

"To grant certificates to Persons in Charge of Steam Engines and Boilers," presented by Mr. John Johnson; supported by Mr. John Wilson (Durham), Mr. Cameron, Mr. Levy, Mr. Jacoby, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Paulton, and Mr. Bell; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 13th April, and to be printed. [Bill 138.]

BISHOPRICS OF SOUTHWARK AND BIRMINGHAM BILL.

"To provide for the foundation of Bishoprics of Southwark and Birmingham, and for matters incidental thereto," presented by Mr. A. J. Balfour; supported by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas and Mr. Attorney-General; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 13th April, and to be printed. [Bill 136.]

Mr. A. J. Balfour.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).

Ordered, That the proceedings on the Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill and on the Telegraph (Money) Bill have precedence this day of the Committee of Supply.—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

**SIR WALTER FOSTER* (Derbyshire, Ilkeston) said he desired to call attention to the very grave condition of affairs existing in Johannesburg. The answer he had received to a Question disclosed a very serious condition of mortality and spread of plague in that city, and as this affected the prosperity of a great industry in Johannesburg and the health of the colonies, he thought it should receive some attention on the present occasion. In reply to his Question the Colonial Secretary had stated that thirty deaths had occurred out of thirty-eight persons affected, showing that the plague was of a most virulent type. Since then he noticed from the papers that deaths had been occurring at the same terrible rate. They were told that no less than fifty-eight cases had occurred amongst the black population, and forty-seven had died, whilst among the whites there were three cases, which had been followed by death in every instance. Once this plague got a hold in a community like Johannesburg, or in the compounds where Asiatics were kept, it became a very difficult matter to deal with. Only this year at the end of February the whole of South Africa seemed to be free from plague. In Cape Colony last year they had 135 cases of plague, of which 117 occurred in the first six months of 1903, while during the last six months there were only eighteen cases which showed that under careful administration in Cape Colony the disease had been practically eradicated. Now this outbreak had suddenly occurred in Johannesburg, and he thought this was a condition of things which deserved the very serious consideration of the Government and the most earnest attention of the Colonial Secretary in order that the progress of the disease might be speedily arrested. With regard to the origin of the disease, he found that it appeared in Johannesburg suddenly, after a past history which would indicate that the disease had been got under in Cape Colony and was therefore not expected to reappear. How had the disease come there? Had this disease been brought in through the importation of Asiatic labour? At all events, the disease broke out in the Indian location, among the natives who were especially liable to the malady. Any gathering of Indians at Johannesburg offered a very suitable ground for the development of the disease. He wished to know if the disease broke out among any newly imported Indians in connection with the mining industry, and whether the locality had been recently recruited by the importation of fresh workers from India. These people had been kept in a portion of Johannesburg which was an insanitary area. That would indicate that the selection of a location for the Indians had not been made with all the care that should have been shown. They had had some experience of the death of their soldiers in South Africa through the choice of insanitary camps, and if the same thing went on they would have a heavy mortality amongst the Asiatics. He understood that the affected area was now in the hands of the town council and that these people had been removed to another district, which confirmed the view that the district was not a very salubrious one where these Asiatics were kept.

There was another point which indicated the gravity of the position. They were told that 360 Indians would be removed at once from the infected area to a site eight miles away, where they would be isolated. That indicated a wise sanitary precaution on the part of the local authorities, and if carried out with careful isolation the removal of these people might have some effect in putting a stop to the spread of the malady. There was a suspicious circumstance to which he would refer, which arose out of a Question put to the Colonial Secretary by an hon. Member about the mortality amongst the people working in the mines. They were then told that the mortality was largely due to a form of pneumonia coming on after influenza. As this outbreak of plague was of the pneumonic variety, he was not at all clear that some of the heavy mortality amongst the miners might not have been due to a disguised form of this plague and might have existed in these locations some months, thus producing the heavy mortality that had occurred. It was a point that ought to be looked into by the Colonial Secretary in order to prevent, in future, any possible overlooking of this disease in its milder forms as might have happened in this instance. The outbreak had been a startling one. In a place hundreds of miles from any port, where before there had been no outbreak at all, they had an epidemic which gave them a sad record of thirty deaths in the first few days. That was a sudden and startling outbreak of a terrible malady. In the past history of South Africa this disease had not penetrated north to the Transvaal, the most northern place being Durban. If there had been any importation of coolies they must have come in through one of the ports, and they may have been responsible for the outbreak of the disease. He wanted to know if the Colonial Secretary could explain the cause of this serious outbreak, which might have occurred through persons imported within about a week of the outbreak. He would suggest that in any regulations made by the Colonial Secretary or the local advisers in future, if they had to draw a labour supply from Asiatic regions, no labourer imported into South Africa should be allowed to mix with the other labourers until he had been isolated for at least a week before joining the gangs with which he had to work, for otherwise they might introduce fresh sources of this fatal complaint.

He wanted to point out further that this disease breaking out in this way was causing a very serious panic in Johannesburg. The people were stated to be leaving in large numbers and the white population was frightened. The disease had already spread to Pretoria and would probably spread throughout the Transvaal to the Orange River Colony and to every part of South Africa. That must cause a very great disturbance of economic conditions. They had been lately discussing the condition of labour in South Africa from different points of view. They had criticised it from the moral point of view and also from the political point of view, but he was now bringing the matter before the House purely from a public health point of view. He wished to point out that the Colonial Secretary was now importing labour into South Africa under conditions which were likely to be dangerous to the public health. If the right hon. Gentleman carried out his Ordinance for importing cheap labour from China, a country in which plague had its home, which was the *fons et origo mali* of the modern plague, it might be the ruin of South Africa. He asked the right hon. Gentleman to consider carefully whether more harm would not be done by the introduction of dangers of this kind than by a restricted supply of labour. He asked that in the new regulations the right hon. Gentleman should insist as far as possible that no port infected with plague should be a source of supply for labour in South Africa. If this was neglected he would add to the other difficulties in South Africa a great economic difficulty, and this question would turn out to be one not of cheap labour, but of very dear labour, because, with conditions like those prevailing in Johannesburg, which might be made permanent, or which might continue for months or years, an economic situation would arise which would be serious for the industries carried on in that part of His Majesty's dominions. It was a question which, from all points of view, would have to be considered very gravely.

Could the Colonial Secretary tell the House the source from which the plague was introduced, and whether it might have been introduced by the recently recruited Indian labour, and carried northwards by coolies from China or India, or was it introduced by rats? It might have another less suspected source. It might be carried by pigs, fowls, turkeys, ducks, or dogs, or even cats, which sometimes carried this disease. Rats were the common carriers, but the other animals he had mentioned often carried the disease in a more insidious way than rats did. For weeks they presented no symptom of the disease whatever, although capable of infecting the locality, but rats did present evidence of it very quickly. When one saw dead rats it was an indication that there was probably plague in the locality. From any of these causes the disease might have been introduced, and he should be glad if the right hon. Gentleman could give any information as to the origin of this deadly outbreak at Johannesburg. He asked whether the Colonial Secretary would take care not only to have the persons connected with the location in which the disease had broken out properly isolated at the place which had been selected eight miles distant, but also to have other Asiatics working at Johannesburg carefully looked after and isolated on the first appearance of suspicious symptoms. In carrying out the importation of labour under the Ordinance and the regulations which, he believed, had yet to be completed, would the right hon. Gentleman take care as far as possible that no labour would be imported from any district where the plague was raging? Only by drawing labour from uncontaminated ports could the right hon. Gentleman keep South Africa safe from a disease which otherwise was likely to be very costly not only to life, but also to the Treasury of the Colony. If he proceeded on these lines the cheap labour might be less harmful than if he neglected them. His own opinion was that the introduction of Chinese labour was an unwise policy, but if the right hon. Gentleman neglected the precautions indicated he would make it not only an unwise policy, but a disastrous policy for the colonies into which these Asiatics were imported. He asked the right hon. Gentleman to state whether he would take steps as far as possible to carry out the suggestions he had made in the interest of the public health of the Transvaal, and the safe working of the mines.

*Mr. JOSEPH WALTON (Yorkshire, W.R., Barnsley) said he should like to know whether the Colonial Secretary had taken fully into consideration in connection with the supply of the shortage of labour in South Africa, the fact that there were in our Indian Empire millions of poverty-stricken people, including hundreds of thousands of unemployed. Was it perfectly true, as the right hon.

Gentleman said the other night, that the Indian coolies would not work in mines? He might tell the right hon. Gentleman that he had gone down coal mines, iron mines, and the Mysore gold mines in India, which were all worked successfully with coolie labour. He submitted that there would be no difficulty whatever in obtaining from India all the labour required in South Africa if the right hon. Gentleman was prepared to have it introduced as free labour. As to the question of the plague, he had, during his travels, seen both Chinese and Indians dying around him like flies, and he could only say that much as they deplored the outbreak of the disease in South Africa, some good might come out of it, because he was sanguine enough to hope that when this got noised abroad in China it would prevent the Chinese from offering themselves for indentured labour in South Africa. In any case there was no question that the Colonial Secretary had taken a most tremendous responsibility on his shoulders in making the proposals he had made in regard to indentured labour in South Africa. They were told that various safeguards were provided by the regulations. During his travels in China he employed over a hundred natives for weeks, and he could not speak too highly of their patience, industry, and reliability. They were infinitely too good to be consigned to anything like the position of bond-slaves in South Africa. The House had been told that when they got to Hong-Kong they could be freed from their bargain, and that they could return to their homes at their own cost. That was an absolutely hypocritical protection. It was stated also that they could return from South Africa at their own cost, and by giving back to the employers the cost incurred in taking them there. The Colonial Secretary must know that was an absolutely unworkable condition to impose on men who wished to relieve themselves from a position of serfdom in South Africa. The right hon. Gentleman had said that Chinamen would be able to earn twelve or fifteen times more in South Africa than in their own country, but there was no guarantee of a minimum wage. Was the Colonial Secretary prepared to introduce into the regulations a stipulation with respect to a minimum wage to be paid to the Chinamen? Was he also prepared to state that in advertising the conditions of engagement in the Chinese villages he would make known the real facts as to the dangerous and deleterious nature of the employment they were asked to go to? Would he tell them that a man could only live seven years following that employment? Would he tell them that the air in mines was filled with minute particles of quartz and that, unless they, like the Kaffirs, had six months freedom from that labour out of every twelve months to recruit, they would at the end of three years return to China doomed men?

Another consideration which should be kept in view was the effect which this policy would have on the minds of the Chinese nation. They had their secret societies and great labour guilds, and information in regard to indentured labour in South Africa would spread like wildfire, creating a bad feeling towards people belonging to the western nations. The cost of living was immensely greater in South Africa than in China, and unless the mine-owners provided rations for the wives and families as well as the men, those who accepted engagements would be infinitely worse off than they would be in China. The general standard of comfort and prosperity in India was decidedly lower than in China. If there was an opportunity in South Africa of giving work to the unemployed, surely the preference, in the first instance, should be given to English-speaking people, and if enough could not be got to meet the requirements, Indians should be engaged. They were told that white men would not work in the mines in South Africa. The mines in Western Australia were worked exclusively by white labour, and why should not the higher grade mines in South Africa be worked in that way? The native blacks or coolies from India could be employed in the lower grade mines which otherwise, perhaps, could not be worked at all. He admired the Colonial Secretary as one of the best sportsmen we had in this country, but he would ask him whether he thought he was playing the game fairly in respect of these Chinese. These poor Chinese would be obtained by procurers, who would be paid at so much per head for inducing them to go to South Africa. The coolies would fall into the hands of the procurers financially, and would be brought at the opportune moment to the recruiting station. There they would say that they understood everything and agreed to everything. He contended that it was absolutely impossible that this large number of Chinamen could be brought to understand all the conditions of their contract before they were taken away from their homes. That was unfair to these men. He understood that the coolies were to have the option of going back to their homes when they reached Hong-Kong. He asked the right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary whether the interest of these unfortunate men should not be safeguarded to the extent that wherever there was a British Consul or Vice-Consul full explanation would be given to them of the terms and conditions of their contract, in addition to the safeguards to be taken at Hong-Kong. He held that it was our duty, as lovers of justice and humanity and of free labour, not to leave any doubt whatever in the mind of every one of these Chinese that the full facts of the case had been made known to them. He did not think, however, that that was humanly possible.

The Colonial Secretary said that the term slavery applied to them was untrue; but if the right hon. Gentleman were unfortunate enough to be compelled to enter into a binding engagement to give his labour in a foreign country which he knew nothing about, and to be compelled to live there in a compound out of which he could not pass without a permit, which need not be granted, he would find whether that was slavery or not—it mattered not whether it was for three years or for life. It was said that whom the gods wished to destroy they first demented. That, to his mind, seemed to be the case with the Government on this Chinese labour question. Did the Government think that the democracy of this country were so dead to every sense of justice, humanity, and human freedom that they would tolerate an Ordinance of the character the right hon. Gentleman had introduced? He desired to ask the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether he could give any further information as to the Tibet Mission? The House was entitled to it when regard was had to the fact that His Majesty's Government and the Indian Government were jointly responsible fo. it. This expedition had been sent out and had arrived at a point where it could not advance for months on account of the cold and wet season. That was only another example of the want of foresight on the part of the Government; and the House was entitled to have some further information as to the actual situation in Tibet. He hoped also that the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for India would not omit putting in a word in favour of the enormous multitudes of unemployed coolies in India, and that these would be able to obtain some labour in South Africa on terms and conditions not destructive of human freedom and the rights of free labour.

He would like to ask the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs what steps were being taken by the Government to safeguard British trade in the treaty port of Niu-Chwang. The noble Lord said that that treaty port could not be neutralised as it was within the sphere of the war; but he saw that a strong protest had been made by the American Consul in Niu-Chwang who had asked that if the gunboat was withdrawn from there it should be replaced by a man-of-war. Had a similar protest and request been made by the British Consul; or had any representations been made by the British commercial community in Niu-Chwang, which was the only treaty port open to British commerce in Manchuria? That trade amounted to £3,000,000 sterling a year. The port of Niu-Chwang ought never to have been occupied by Russia alone, but by the allied forces. What steps were the Government taking to protect British interests and property there? The hon. Gentleman said that the railway from Shan-hai-Kwan to Niu-Chwang and Sin-min-ting was a Chinese railway. As if that was news to the House and the world. The Chinese Government were under treaty obligation to properly protect that railway so that the net receipts should be given to satisfy the claims of the British bondholders. Had the Government taken the necessary steps to press on the

Chinese Government that they must not allow that railway to fall into Russian hands? There was also the question of the Russian gunboat at Shanghai He wanted to know what representations had been made in regard to that to the Russian or Chinese Governments. Was it not almost an act of war for a Russian gunboat to remain in the great commercial centre of Shanghai, which was neutral territory? He also noticed that a strong protest had come from the Russian Government to the Chinese Government because the latter had advanced troops beyond the Great Wall, although that was in Chinese territory and the Chinese Government were under no obligation to consult the Russian Government about it. He was glad to know that the United States Government had taken action to secure, if possible, the neutrality of China and that the integrity of the Chinese Empire should not be violated either by Russia or Japan. Had the British Government acted in any way in concert with the Government of the United States in regard to this matter, and with what result? Had any arrangement been arrived at, or any pledge been given by Russia and Japan not to violate neutrality of China proper? He had heard that Russian troops had been marched into what was known as China proper.

*Dr. HUTCHINSON (Sussex, Rye) said he had some claim to speak on this Chinese question, for he was the only Member of the House who had ever had charge of Chinese coolies. At one time in his wild career he had charge of a steamship—he meant medical charge—he was not quite qualified yet to take charge of the Channel Fleet. On that occasion there were on board a large number of Chinese coolies who were going back to Hong-Kong. He thoroughly endorsed what the hon. Member for Barnsley had said as to the good qualities of the Chinese. He had nothing but good to say about them, so far as that experience went. He only wished to contradict the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary as to the strength of the lungs of these coolies. The right hon. Gentleman said that the lungs of the natives of India and China were made of harder material than those of Europeans, and were not acted upon by the dust from the drills in the mines.

*The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. Lyttelton, Warwick and Leamington): I said no such thing.

*Dr. HUTCHINSON said he included Kaffirs with the natives of India and China. His experience was that there was no race in the world which was more liable to disease than the Chinese. They had no resisting power. Look at their diet. It consisted of rice and water and a little opium. [An Hon. Member: And vegetables.] The ordinary Chinese coolies did not get much in the way of vegetables when on board ship. Their resistance to disease was very small, and nothing astonished him more than to see a Chinaman a very little ill in the morning and in the evening he was dead. It was very important that all that should be considered. The Colonial Secretary was like a reckless engine driver who was running full steam ahead without recognising the red lights of danger in his path. The appearance of the plague in South Africa was a red light indicating danger. What would happen if with tens of thousands of Asiatics shut up in compounds a case of plague occurred? Would that be calculated to improve the work of the whites in South Africa? The outbreak was, it seemed to him, a dispensation of providence to stop the hurry in which this proposal was being rushed through. In his opinion it was essential that every Chinaman should be medically examined before he left his own country, and also on his arrival in South Africa. They ought to be, so to speak, "vetted." He hoped the Government would be able to give information with reference to the officials who would be chosen to select the sites for the compounds. He had his faith shaken in the Ministers who were responsible for the treatment of British soldiers in South Africa; and he asked for an assurance that a competent man would be appointed to select the sites of the compounds and also to look after the sanitation of the compounds. Plague was caught through abrasions of the skin which were very likely to occur to men working in the mines; and if the plague broke out on a compound it would be very difficult to prevent it from spreading to the white population.

*MR. LYTTELTON said that he was personally, and the Government were also indebted to the two high authorities who had addressed the House. He was sorry that owing to the recent outbreak of plague in Johannesburg he had not been able to inform himself on the Questions which the hon. Gentlemen had a perfect right to ask. A telegram had been sent to Lord Milner which he had answered as fully as he could ; but on the immediate Questions asked by the two hon. Gentlemen he had not received any immediate assistance from Lord Milner. Of course he would have to take the best medical advice he could before he attempted to make any proper reply to the Questions which were so rightly put to him. He could, however, give the hon. Member for the Rye Division a reassurance that a medical officer would examine each coolie in China before he was embarked, and that a superintendent would accompany each ship to discharge the duty of looking after the health of the coolies. No ship would be allowed to leave without having a superintendent on board. Then there would be vaccination and a most careful examination of the health of the coolies, and as far as human precautions could be taken they would be taken. The hon. Gentleman the Member for the Ilkeston Division asked what was the source of the plague. He had fortified himself with the opinion of the hon. Member for the London University, which was as good as that of any hon. Member, and it was to the effect that the source of the bubonic plague was still a matter of scientific obscurity. It had been ascertained that it was capable of being spread through animals. The discovery of the source of malaria had made great strides as compared with the discovery of the source of bubonic plague. It appeared to him, if he might say so as a layman, that the suggestion of the hon. Member that every precaution should be taken for knowing beforehand the site for isolation in case of an outbreak of bubonic plague was an eminently reasonable one ; and he could hardly believe that the medical officers in the Transvaal would not readily fall in with it. He thought the hon. Gentleman would admit that, in regard to the present outbreak, not only was every foresight and vigilance exercised but that sites for isolation purposes were actually taken in the event of an outbreak occurring. If those precautions were taken before the outbreak, *à fortiori* they should credit the Transvaal authorities with exercising precautions after the outbreak had occurred.

*SIR WALTER FOSTER said he wished to ask why an outbreak was anticipated. The reasons for the anticipation might throw light on the possible sources of the plague.

*MR. LYTTELTON said he was afraid he could not bind himself to an answer. The source was more or less conjectural. What he believed happened was as follows. It was for some time complained in Johannesburg that an insanitary area existed in the city, and one of the most deplorable features of the shortage of labour was that the Johannesburg municipality was unable to carry out the sanitary provisions they promoted and to clear the insanitary area which they knew existed. There was a shortage of no less than 1,000 labourers who were required to carry out this and other desirable work. That insanitary area was, he believed, not inhabited solely by Indian coolies but by Indian traders and other Indian inhabitants. They were not recent importations. There were a great many Indians in Johannesburg in President Kruger's time, and one of the areas which they inhabited was condemned as insanitary, but no labour existed to put into force the necessary remedy. No doubt, therefore, Lord Milner and the authorities of Johannesburg, seeing that certain areas were condemned, very likely foresaw that some epidemic might break out ; and although it was very deplorable that the areas could not be cleared it was probably held that it would be even more deplorable to turn Asiatics into the streets in the present cold weather. As regarded the introduction of the Chinese, any man would be mad who would introduce them into a place where the plague existed or where it was not scrupulously isolated and without taking the highest medical opinion as to its safety. Without taking upon himself the functions of the medical profession he might say that no such introduction was for a moment contemplated by the authorities of the Transvaal unless they were medically advised that such a proceeding would not be attended by risk.

*DR. HUTCHINSON said he wished to know who would select the sites of the compounds. He was sorry that he had not much faith in the men on the spot, as Johannesburg was one of the most insanitary towns in the Empire. He wanted the right men to be selected.

*MR. LYTTELTON said he had no doubt the best men would be appointed. Johannesburg was thoroughly insanitary during the time of the late Boer Government, but now great efforts were being made by Englishmen to improve it, and one of their great complaints was that they could not get the necessary labour now that they had the power and the money at their disposal. He strongly resented the imputation against the medical authorities out there, who had proved that they merited the confidence reposed in them. There were 30,000 less men in the mines now than there were before the war. One hon. Member asked whether measures would be taken to see that no Chinaman should be shipped from any ports known to be infected with the plague. He thought he might promise, without any consultation, that that would be done. With regard to the question of getting Indian coolies for the mines he quite agreed that it would be desirable, if possible, to obtain British rather than Chinese subjects for this purpose, but the difficulty was that the Indian coolies were very actively employed already, and none willing to work in the mines could be found. He had been told that Indian coolies absolutely refused to have anything to do with mines or any underground work. The difference in the cost of living in China and in the Transvaal would not greatly affect the question, because the cost of the Chinamen's living would be borne by the persons employing them.

SIR E. DURNING-LAWRENCE (Cornwall, Truro) desired to call attention to the hardship entailed on his constituents owing to the action of the Government importing the granite which they were using in their naval works from Norway and other places. This was a matter of great importance to his constituents who were granite workers. No doubt it was, owing to the cheap labour abroad, quite as cheap to get granite from Norway as from Cornwall. He protested against the action of the Government.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs) said he did not purpose to follow the hon. Gentleman into the question of Cornish granite; he merely wished to put a few Questions to the Colonial Secretary on the question of the Transvaal. The first Question he wished to allude to was the insanitary condition of Johannesburg, which was somewhat serious. The Colonial Secretary had said the sanitary condition of Johannesburg was very bad owing to the want of labour to improve the sanitation of the town, but from the Blue-books he found that Lord Milner had allowed 70,000 or 80,000 men to be allotted among the mines while the sanitation of Johannesburg was allowed to go.

*MR. LYTTELTON said he alluded to the urban portions of the town, not the compounds of the miners.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that no one for a moment would suggest that the urban portions of Johannesburg were in a worse sanitary condition than the Kaffir compounds. All he said was that here was Lord Milner distributing these men among the mines instead of turning them on to the work of improving the sanitation of the place and preserving the lives of British subjects. That was simply because the mines came first. He would also like to know what had become of the great land settlement scheme. During the past two or three sessions the House had heard a great deal of this land settlement scheme under which thousands of British subjects were to be settled on the land. One of the great inducements held out to the Yeomanry, to the whole of the three drafts, was a promise that large tracts of fertile land would be allotted to them; millions were to be spent on irrigation. Was it not the fact that, in spite of all the money that had been spent, there were only 300 settlers on the land, and that on each of those settlers £2,000 had already been spent. He did not think we ought to allow all these miscalculations on the part of the Government to drop out of sight without some sort of comment, because it in fact formed part of the Liberal case that the Government at every step they took had miscalculated. They had laid down schemes which one by one had been proved to be false. The House was entitled to know from the Government what was the result of this great land settlement scheme. The Secretary of State for War was one of the missionaries of the scheme. The right hon. Gentleman went out on behalf of the Government to view the land, and came back and reported that it was a land flowing with milk and honey, and a land where all the surplus population of this country could settle down to peace and prosperity. The House was entitled to know whether in this case as in other respects the Government had completely miscalculated the matter.

The second point upon which he should like some information was the finances of the Transvaal. He remembered the statement made by the late Colonial Secretary with regard to the finances of the Transvaal, and the fact that we were to get £35,000,000 back, and he recollected that the right hon. Member for West Bristol held out the prospect of our getting a considerable portion of the war expenditure back from the Transvaal. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham went out to South Africa, and his solitary achievement was to obtain from the magnates of Johannesburg a promise that they would provide £30,000,000, about one-eighth of the amount spent on the war. They promised £30,000,000 if we lent the Transvaal £35,000,000. We lent the £35,000,000, but what had we got of the £30,000,000? It was unpleasant to have to remind Members of the House of the promises that had been broken, but it was necessary in this case, and therefore he would quote a few extracts from a speech made by the late Colonial Secretary on this question. He said: "The wilderness would blossom like the rose." At the present moment it was apparently only a yellow rose. With regard to the financial condition he said—

> "Lord Milner has erred, if at all, on the side of caution. . . . One of our difficulties has been how to deal with the extraordinary growth which we have to chronicle, and which comes upon us as a surprise month by month. . . . I must warn the House that the Estimates of the Transvaal are perpetually changing."

that certainly was true.

> "I can only give the latest returns, but my own hope and expectation is that, favourable as they are, even they will be improved upon. I anticipate a surplus, after providing for the £35,000,000 and the £30,000,000, of at least £300,000 a year for future development. I say that is an astonishing result."

The next passage was a characteristic one, in regard to which he thought that an apology was due to the Liberal Party.

> "There are differences about Lord Milner, but there is not a man who would be so ungenerous as not to congratulate him on this marvellous result of his energy, his ability, and his unexampled devotion to duty. I cannot but recall—though I am not inclined to dwell upon them—the predictions which have been made by those who have been opposed to our policy with regard to the financial results."

But events had shown the predictions of the Liberal Party to be quite correct, and those of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham to be altogether wrong. And what had happened? The right hon. Gentleman had resigned from the Cabinet because he disagreed with those who left it and agreed with those who remained. That hardly accounted for all that had happened. The right hon. Gentleman would have had to explain away all those predictions, and probably he thought it better not to attempt it. Why had there been all these miscalculations. The road to ruin in South Africa was simply paved with miscalculations. Was the Colonial Secretary sure that the High Commissioner had made his last miscalculations? Lord Milner miscalculated the temper of the Boers at the start, the probable duration of the war, the financial outlook, and the land settlement prospects. On what ground did the right hon. Gentleman come to the House of Commons with a policy which many believed to be disastrous to British honour, based on the calculations of one who had been proved on every cardinal point to be wrong in the past? The blunders with regard to the revenue were due either to miscalculation or maladministration, and he was not certain that it was all due to miscalculation. One thing was perfectly clear, viz., that the administration was infinitely more costly than that of the corrupt Kruger Government. The functions of the Colonial Secretary did not end with merely sanctioning Lord Milner's Ordinances or defending Lord Milner's blunders. As long as the Transvaal was a Crown colony the right hon. Gentleman owed something to the House of Commons in the way of supervising what was being done. It was impossible to say how far we should have to finance them, and the House ought to scrutinise the administration as carefully as that of a Government Department.

Another matter on which information was required was land settlement. Seeing that the projects for settling our own countrymen in the Transvaal had failed, it was evident that, so far as agriculture was concerned, the matter would have to be left with the Dutch settlers, and consequently it was most important that they should be well treated under the repatriation schemes. Of the £3,000,000 voted for the restoration of the devastated country, £1,500,000 had gone in so-called administration. That was either stupidity or spoliation. In any event it was the duty of the right hon. Gentleman to look personally into the matter. What would be the impression left upon the Dutch settlers, to whom the country had been deliberately left—for that was what the Chinese Labour Ordinance really meant? It was all very well to say that more white men would be required if Chinese were employed in the mines; but they would be clerks, engineers, and so forth, who did not intend to settle in the country. The British population was too much an urban population in South Africa. We had no surplus agricultural population to send out, and the next best thing to send was mining labour, but the right hon. Gentleman had deliberately declared that no miners need apply, they were not sufficiently cheap. After an expenditure of £250,000,000, with the probable addition of £35,000,000, British character and British prospects had been deliberately sacrificed for the purpose of converting dividends of 180 per cent. declared last week on Crown Reefs into perhaps 250 per cent. Since, by the decision of the Colonial Secretary, it had been left to the Dutch to settle the agricultural districts, it was of vital importance that they should be made contented with British rule. But how could they be so contented? They were not satisfied with the terms of peace, even in their most generous interpretation, and when they saw that fully 50 per cent. of the £3,000,000 went to officials for so-called administration—to which they would give another name—what would they think of British rule? He thought the right hon. Gentleman was making a mistake. They ought to give Great Britain a chance, and if they did that there was a possibility of making a loyal Colony of it. He believed that the Boers would become loyal citizens if they were given the opportunity; but we had done all in our power to discourage them, not only by introducing Chinese labour, but also by means of despatches sent by our representatives, which were insulting to the Boer population. There was one despatch which he could not help thinking showed the paltry character of the man. The late Colonial Secretary sent Lord Milner a communication from Mr. Courtney enclosing a letter from General Botha, and, in reply, Lord Milner wrote a despatch, in which he deliberately referred to General Botha, first as "ex-General Botha," and afterwards as "Mr. Botha." That was one of those silly, stupid little blunders which hurt a small nation. He did not deny that Lord Milner was honest and sincere, and had great capacity, but he also had great capacity for making blunders and miscalculations. If Lord Milner was allowed to go on making blunder after blunder and miscalculation after miscalculation, writing violent political articles attacking his opponents' and insulting half the population he was governing, the losses they would have to incur in repairing those blunders would be greater than ever.

DR. MACNAMARA (Camberwell, N.) asked how Messrs. Hamilton and Perry, the two agents who had been recruiting coolies in Tien-tsin since 25th February, could have been licensed, having regard to the fact that the arrangements for issuing licences were not made until 8th March. He wished to know, supposing that these coolies had been engaged by private treaty, contrary to the regulations issued last Monday, whether the Government would permit these coolies to be indentured under the Ordinance. Messrs. Hamilton and Perry had been recruiting in China for the last five weeks, and if any agreements had been come to with Chinese labourers what became of all the undertakings which the right hon. Gentleman had given and which they all desired to see carried out, that the Chinese should have the whole matter explained to them? The official who was to do this under the Ordinance had not been appointed yet. In these circumstances what became of all their precautions and regulations? Had Messrs. Hamilton and Perry a licence? Supposing these coolies had been engaged by a private treaty on behalf of the Transvaal mine-owners, would that engagement permit them to be indentured under the Ordinance, or would their engagements have to begin again in accordance with the regulations? He also wished to know what would happen when the child of a coolie arrived at the age of sixteen years. He was aware that the Colonial Secretary had told him that a coolie could only be there for three years and that the children taken out to South Africa must be under ten years of age, and therefore the case he had put could not arise.

*MR. LYTTELTON: We only indenture them for a period of three years.

DR. MACNAMARA said he understood that a coolie could not remain more than six years.

*MR. LYTTELTON: That is so.

DR. MACNAMARA said he thought the right hon. Gentleman was wrong, and in case he was wrong he wished to know would he make provision for the treatment of children when they arrived at sixteen years of age.

*MR. LYTTELTON: I will do so if I am wrong.

DR. MACNAMARA said that Regulation 15 provided that every male child introduced into this colony, on attaining sixteen years of age, in the event of not entering into a contract with the importer, had to be returned at the expense of the importer to his own country. He hoped that the provision made in the first form of the Ordinance for the repatriation of coolie children when they arrived at the age of 16 would be introduced into the regulations.

*MR. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland) said that the question of this recruiting which was already proceeding in China was a very important one. The right hon. Gentleman had said that no Chinaman would go to South Africa until he had had the Ordinance explained to him by a licensed recruiter and by advertisement issued by the Chinese Government setting forth the terms on which the engagement was accepted. It was an essential part of his scheme that no coolie should be taken from his home to Hong-Kong until a licensed recruiter had explained the terms of engagement to him, and until the Chinese Government had had an opportunity of advertising the terms in the Chinese villages. Messrs. Hamilton and Perry were the agents of the Transvaal Native Labour Association, and, if the Colonial Secretary or Lord Milner were to express the desire of the Government that their operations should not be continued until the Ordinance came into operation, he could not believe that the association would refuse to suspend their operations. The Colonial Secretary had said that he had just received a telegram from Lord Milner requesting that the Ordinance should be applied to Asiatics now in Johannesburg. If that request referred merely to the sanitary provisions of the Ordinance there might be no objection.

*MR. LYTTELTON: I understood it in that sense, but the terms of the telegram are somewhat ambiguous.

*MR. HERBERT SAMUEL said it was a matter of great importance if there was an agitation to get rid of all Asiatics from the Transvaal except those who would be under confinement. The right hon. Gentleman had attributed the outbreak of the plague to the insanitary condition of Johannesburg, and had stated that Johannesburg had been allowed to remain in an insanitary condition only because the town council had been unable to obtain the 1,000 labourers necessary for carrying out a scheme of improvement. Since the war 34,000 labourers had been drafted into the mines. Why had not the Government secured a certain proportion of these men to carry out these urgent operations? A thousand additional labourers had been drafted into the mines in February. Why had not the Government insisted upon having a prior claim that these labourers should, in the first instance, be placed at the service of the municipality?

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport) said he should not have intervened in this debate but for the remarks of the hon. Member for Carnarvon, who had used language which should not be allowed to pass in any House where there was the slightest pretence of loyalty or patriotism. The language used by the hon. Member with respect to Lord Milner was disgracefully unworthy. [Cries of "Order."] If that epithet were considered too strong, he would ask the House which was most wrong—to use such an epithet or to allow to pass unchallenged such language as had been used by the hon. Member opposite against one of our greatest Governors, who had put this country under greater obligations [Cries of "Financial"], by the loyal and thorough discharge of the duties entrusted to him by the King, than perhaps anyone who had recently been in such a position.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask you whether we are to take it now as having been laid down as a precedent that it is in order to describe a statement made by an hon. Member in another part of the House as "disgracefully unworthy."

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY: I at once withdrew it.

*MR. SPEAKER: I called the hon. Member to order at the time, and I quite understood the hon. Member, in the words which followed, to have withdrawn that statement. If it was not done it ought to be done.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY said he unreservedly withdrew the statement, if it was considered a phrase he ought not to have used. At the same time he said the language of the hon. Member opposite was language which ought not to have been used by anyone in that House who had the slightest regard for the interests of the country to which he belonged, and he did not think it right that such an attack as had been made upon Lord Milner should be allowed to pass entirely unchallenged on that side of the House. He undertook to say that the whole of the public duties discharged by the whole of the Members of that House were a comparatively small matter as compared with the duties of Lord Milner and the work he had done for them. He went out to South Africa at a time of immense difficulty, and faced the difficulties with the utmost courage, patience, wisdom, and statesmanship, and the reward he got from Gentlemen of the type of the hon. Member for Carnarvon and those who sat behind him and applauded him on this occasion, was to have his action described as petty and paltry. These epithets justified the objection he stated to the language used by the hon. Member. He could not suppose that there was one responsible man on the Front Opposition Bench who would adopt the language used by the hon Member for Carnarvon in regard to Lord Milner. Such language was grossly unpatriotic. The criticism of Lord Milner's Administration showed that some hon. Members were of opinion that it was opposed to the British colonisation of the Transvaal. On that side of the House some, who were not worse judges than hon. Gentlemen opposite, were of opinion that Lord Milner's Administration made directly for the British colonisation of that country. He fully allowed that this was an object common to hon. Members on both sides. They were all agreed that the one great object of British statesmanship should be the colonisation of the Transvaal with a white population. They on that side of the House believed that that colonisation was likely to come from the measures which Lord Milner had instituted and was carrying out under the direction of the home Government. White men would be required to carry on the higher work of supervision in connection with the development of the mines. The hon. Member for Carnarvon had referred to the necessity for attending to the requirements of the agricultural and rural parts of the country. That was an object which they also desired, and they hoped that Lord Milner's administration would have the effect of achieving it. Although Lord Milner was little in want of his defence, he wished to put on record his objection to the language used regarding him—language which was unworthy of the people who uttered it.

SIR ROBERT REID (Dumfries Burghs) said he was glad to hear from the hon. and gallant Gentleman, for the first time in the many debates there had been during the past five years about South Africa, a statement which he thought was absolutely true, namely, that the object of all Gentlemen was the same. His hon. friend the Member for Carnarvon was one of those whose objects were as much for the interest of this country throughout the whole of the painful controversy of the past five years, as those of any Gentleman on either side of the House. If the hon. and gallant Gentleman who objected to what he regarded as calumnious statements with reference to Lord Milner, would look back over the five years of this South African controversy, he would find that his hon. friend had been subjected to ample calumny from that side of the House, and that he had received very little reparation. What he wanted to get the House to look at was the true picture of the condition of the Transvaal which was painted by his hon. friend the Member for Carnarvon. They were responsible for that country, and if they did not take care it would prove a bottomless pit for the blood and treasure of this country. The Transvaal was now in a condition that deserved the gravest attention from the House of Commons, and in a short time it might be in a still more serious condition. They had put upon that country a load of debt already of £35,000,000, which represented, roughly, about £80 per head of the white population, as against £18 per head for the National Debt in this country. We were about, if we could, to place £30,000,000 more upon their backs. They could not bear it. He thought they should give up all hope of getting anything repaid by the Transvaal in respect of the expenses of that most disastrous and unfortunate war. Those expenses and a great deal more would have to be borne by the people of this country, and they had not nearly got to the end of the outlay. Any outlay that would be in honour incumbent upon this country would not be objected to by those who objected to the war, but the responsibility would be upon those who created the war.

Then how much money were we spending on the Transvaal apart from the war. He was quite satisfied the Colonial Secretary would, in due course, give them full information in regard to that. It was very difficult to find out. He was not suggesting that there was any design to conceal it. But some items appeared in the Army Estimates, some in the Civil Service or Colonial Estimates; all these amounts would make a formidable total. In March last year the late Colonial Secretary said that at that time they amounted to £16,000,000. Since then amounts had been repaid out of the loan for which we were responsible, and further sums expended. Apart from that, we were now paying the cost of a garrison of 21,000 troops, while before the war there were only 3,000 soldiers in South Africa.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): There were more than that for some years.

SIR ROBERT REID said he accepted the correction. A few years before; but after the Raid, when war was expected, there was an increase, but the normal garrison in time of peace was something between 3,000 and 4,000 men. It was now 21,000 men, and that involved this country in an outlay of between £3,000,000 and £4,000,000. The war itself was said to have cost us £217,000,000. There was now a falling off in the revenues of the Transvaal.

Lord Milner had estimated the proceeds from the railways at from £2,000,000; six weeks afterwards he estimated them at £2,250,000; and six weeks afterwards again he estimated them at £2,500,000, yet there was now an enormous deficit. Why had the calculations been so flagrantly and ludicrously inaccurate? No explanation had been made. All the sanguine anticipations of what would happen after the war had been falsified. The country was governed under arbitrary and despotic conditions, more fitted for St. Petersburg than a British colony. All the persons living there were at the mercy of the Government. He did not say the officials of the Government would abuse their powers, but there was no freedom, not a vestige of self-government, although the time had come when steps should be taken in that direction. No one would dispute that Lord Milner desired to do his duty; but it was not wrong, it was their duty, to say, if they thought so, that the presence and action of Lord Milner in South Africa had been a national calamity. Many of the greatest misfortunes which befel this country had been brought about by high-minded men who thought they were doing their duty. He believed the present was a case in point, and that as long as Lord Milner remained in South Africa a satisfactory condition of things could not exist. He thought the time had come when steps should be taken in the direction of self-government in that country. They had had a recent illustration of its necessity. He believed at all times it was a desirable thing for a British colony but that it was specially so at this time, when, in every department of Government in the Transvaal there had been a complete and signal failure, for which this country had, unfortunately, to bear the consequences.

*MR. LYTTELTON: In answer to the speeches from the other side, it is vain for me to repeat what the House knows perfectly well—that we on this side of the House, and that I myself, have not merely a devoted admiration for Lord Milner, but believe that over a period now of nearly eight years he has made sacrifices of health, and of almost all else that makes life dear, and has poured out his work for the benefit, as he believes, of the country over which he presides. It would be wrong for me to take up the time of the House with meeting, or attempting to meet, vague insinuations against him, or vague invectives. It is perfectly true that the anticipations of the immediate prosperity of the Transvaal have not been fully realised; but hon. Members are quite in error if they suppose that the condition of the Transvaal, if one element only were added to the general condition of things, would be short of that which was anticipated by Lord Milner. It was only a day or two ago that we heard speaker after speaker on the opposite side of the House dealing with the enormous wealth of the Transvaal, showing what a marvellous recovery it had had in the time since the war. There is no Member on that side who has studied the question who does not know perfectly well that the output of the mines at present is at the rate of £14,000,000 a year, and that it might be £20,000,000 or £25,000,000 if the existing machinery that is upon the spot was employed. How great, then, is the responsibility which hon. Members take upon themselves! They are perfectly right from their point of view if they think the proposal which has been made morally wrong; I accept that. But if they do not think the proposal morally wrong to introduce, in the conditions which have been described, Chinese labour, they have at once a remedy for the gloomy and deplorable picture which was painted by my hon. and learned friend opposite. He has asked if even now the Transvaal by itself is perfectly able to meet its obligations. I have the assurance of Lord Milner [OPPOSITION ironical cheers]—and I think Lord Milner is a financial authority [MINISTERIAL cheers]—that no demand will be made at all on the Imperial Government in respect of the £30,000,000 guaranteed loan which has been made—it is £35,000,000, but £5,000,000 have not been issued. It is perfectly true he has said he will not be responsible for the following year if a third of the available assets of the colony are placed beyond reach—that is to say, if the Transvaal is allowed by this country, as it has been allowed, to put in force the propositions which he has made, which have been approved—I will not argue it again—with practical unanimity by that country. [Cries of "Oh!" and "Hear, hear!"] I do not wish to put myself before the House as a financial expert, nor to embark in any bold prophecy, but I think a mere study of the figures themselves will suffice. If the output of the mines is increased to the rate of £20,000,000 a year, and if to that be added all the auxiliary traffic that comes to the railways, and all the incresed commerce and business I think you will find Lord Milner's statement is demonstrably true. With that output you will be in a position amply to meet the obligations of the colony. It was put to me by the hon. Member for Carnarvon, and to a certain extent, though with greater charity, by my hon. and learned friend opposite, that the Transvaal had repudiated its obligations—the war contribution of £30,000,000—although they had received from this country £35,000,000 as consideration.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: I certainly never said repudiated. I simply said they had failed; they had not paid it.

*Mr. LYTTELTON: I shall be in the recollection of the House in saying that the hon. Member made a very great grievance of it. It has been alleged, not once, but several times, that the mine-owners have failed to perform their part of the bargain, the underwriting of £10,000,000 of the war loan. The bargain was to underwrite this loan of £30,000,000 as regards the first instalment of £10,000,000 if the market conditions werefavourable. ["Oh, oh!" and laughter.] It is useless to laugh. I can assure the House that was the bargain, and hon. Members will have an opportunity of seeing for themselves and raising the question again. But I assert that the bargain made by my predecessor in the most distinct terms was that he would not call upon the financiers to honour their underwriting unless the market conditions were favourable. ["Oh, oh!" and laughter.]

Mr. WALLACE (Perth): Who was to judge as to the conditions of the market?

*Mr. LYTTELTON: I am quite willing that my hon. friend should be the judge himself either in the case of the Government or in the case of the financiers. My hon. and learned friend would see the emphatic assurance given by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham to the financiers on the occasion of their entering on the bargain. He would see that my predecessor, in the most distinct terms, said that he would not call upon them to underwrite this loan or himself issue the loan unless the market conditions were reasonably favourable. If my hon. friend had been in my place, say, in January, and had called upon the financiers to execute this bargain, not only would it have been looked upon as a gross breach of faith, but the financiers would be able to say, "We did not make this bargain, and we will not fulfil it." They have never for a moment shrunk from the obligation which they deliberately undertook of underwriting this £10,000,000 so soon as the conditions of the market were reasonably favourable. There is not an hon. Member opposite acquainted with these matters who would venture to say that the conditions of the market in January, February, and March were reasonably favourable.

*Mr. McCRAE (Edinburgh, E.): Were there no conditions as to Chinese labour?

*Mr. LYTTELTON: The suggestion of the hon. Member for East Edinburgh is ill-founded, and I am certain that my predecessor gave no undertaking, whatever, any more than I have since I succeeded him.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: What is his view now?

*Mr. LYTTELTON: I hope that my right hon. friend will be back soon, and the hon. Member may have an opportunity of hearing his views. A Question was asked me about land settlement. I have not the figures here, but substantially the hon. Member is correct. I think that the number is 312. I cannot at this moment give him the expenditure accurately on land settlement because a good many farms bought on advantageous terms by the Government have not yet been occupied, though they are an asset against the expenditure which has been incurred for the settling of the existing settlers.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE : How is the settlement progressing ?

*MR. LYTTELTON : We have no late news as to that, but the hon. Member must be aware that there is a good deal occurring just now to occupy the attention of the Transvaal Government.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE : Are the settlers increasing ?

*MR. LYTTELTON : I think they are increasing ; certainly they are not getting less. I do not think also it is just to say that the expenditure on the Army in South Africa is simply in consequence of the war. The hon. Gentleman who raised the point was not present, I think, at the Army debates, in which our obligations in future with regard to India were conclusively shown by the Prime Minister and the Secretary for War.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) : Does the right hon. Gentleman mean the Army debates this year or last year ?

*MR. LYTTELTON : I am speaking of the 21,000 men which my hon. and learned friend mentioned as a charge referable entirely to the expenditure on the war. I made the observation that it would not be fair to charge the whole of that expenditure on the Army to the war, because the placing of a very considerable force in South Africa would be highly desirable now, if only to make the troops available for India.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs) : I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman was in the House when the Secretary for War, in answer to a Question, distinctly said that the maintenance of this force of 21,000 men was entirely justified on the ground of South Africa itself. The Question was put explicitly to him, and the reason, of course, was that during last session we had a totally different story as to the necessity.

*MR. LYTTELTON : The right hon. Gentleman has quoted there an authority which I cannot resist. I had in my mind the speeches of the Prime Minister and the Secretary for War ; but I still think it a fair argument to say that the Army, placed as near India as the Army is in South Africa, does at any rate perform an Imperial purpose different and separate from that which it performs when occupying a country with which we have so recently been at war.

Another point raised was as to the amount of money spent in the Transvaal over and above the actual cost of the war. I answer that by saying that the words "repatriation" and "free grant" are very often used as different terms, although they often turn out to be the same terms. No one who fairly looks at this question and thinks of the immense expenditure on the war—a war began by the invasion of His Majesty's dominions—who looks through the figures and estimates the burdens this country has taken on itself, since the war closed, in restocking farms and rebuilding houses, in giving free grants and paying war damage, in spending large sums in honouring the military receipts for requisitions made during the war, will fail to agree that no country has ever treated a conquered country more generously than we have done. At any rate you cannot have it both ways. I gather that a certain number of hon. Members opposite deplore an expenditure, which I admit to be lavish, on the Boers ; on the other side we have the hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs saying that £2,000,000 here and £3,000,000 there are not nearly enough, that we ought to do far more for the assistance of the Boers. Yes ; but does the hon. Member reflect that there have been mistakes here and there in organising, in a country of that kind, the gigantic work of reconstruction, repatriation, and reconstitution ? I beg the hon. Member to show some sympathy with those who have worked themselves to the bone on behalf of the Boers in that country—in resettling the people, in educating them, in inducing thousands of men to put forward their best efforts on behalf of agriculture with exceedingly good results. All honour be given to the men who have most enthusiastically discharged their duty to the benefit of good feeling and to the attainment of that reconciliation which all desire should be rekindled by such generous efforts. The hon. Member for Camberwell asked me, with regard to the Ordinance, whether Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Perry have a licence to recruit. No, certainly not; no one has authority to give them it. A licence to recruit is to be given by some authority that does not at present exist. You cannot ship Chinamen under the Ordinance before the conditions precedent under that Ordinance have been fulfilled, and one of the conditions precedent to the embarkation of Chinese is the explanation to them of the contract by an official of their own and an official appointed by the British Government. Neither of those two officials is yet appointed, and surely it is perfectly obvious that, as no Chinaman can be lawfully embarked, neither can he be lawfully received under the Ordinance. If, as the result of the machinations, as the hon. Member thinks, of the persons he has named, there is an unlawful recruitment of Chinamen, the remedy is clear. The Chinamen could not be received on board a British ship which would carry them to Africa, neither could they be landed at the port in Africa, where it would be illegal to receive them.

Dr. MACNAMARA: Will the right hon. Gentleman issue instructions that the recruitment shall be stopped until the proper official has been appointed?

***Mr. LYTTELTON**: The hon. Member may have had a more happy experience than I have, but I never give directions or orders when I have no power to see that they are obeyed. I do not intend to give directions to people in China over whom I have no jurisdiction. In regard to the second Question, I hold to the opinion that there is no apprehension whatever of any Chinese boy of sixteen being in Africa. The Question about explaining the contract in advertisements in Chinese villages was a fair one. I think that ought to be done before any recruit is taken from the villages, and it will be a double protection. There is only one more point. Will the hon. Member for Carnarvon assure me—will he stake his reputation upon it—that he will be able to get from among the mining population of Wales men who will consent to work alongside black men in the mines in South Africa? I am absolutely persuaded he cannot. [An Hon. Member: Nobody asks it!] I say no white man—no Englishman, at all events—can be persuaded to do that. You may regret it, but it is the fact. We have a duty also to the Kaffirs. There is a certain class of opinion which says, Clear out the Kaffirs and put all white men in. [Opposition cries of "No, no!"] I am glad to hear that disavowal. If there is anybody here who holds that opinion, let me say with great respect that he mistakes the functions we have in Africa, and, what is more, he absolutely mistakes the ability of this country or any country to clear out the Kaffir population in order to make room for whites. The standard of unskilled labour in the country must be the standard of Kaffirs. To that standard you will never get white men in this country, any more than you will get white men in Australia or New Zealand, to conform. Let me beg, therefore, the hon. Member for Carnarvon, when he endeavours to give us assistance in the solution of one of the most difficult problems ever encountered by an English Minister, to eliminate that which it is absolutely impossible to carry out.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) said there were problems connected with the present condition of the Transvaal which demanded the serious attention of the House, and he hoped they would be discussed later on. His object now was to ask for information as to matters of the greatest importance to Ireland. The Irish Land Act of last year had been five months in operation, but they knew absolutely nothing, with any certainty, of its operations. He made every allowance for the difficulties and delays which must attend the starting of so great a machine, for the delay which was necessary in selecting a proper staff and preparing offices, but he could not help remembering that, between the passage of the Land Bill into law and the date it came into operation, there had been a considerable interval, during which those preliminary matters ought to have been attended to.

The Land Commission published Returns of its operations every month, but they had had no Return so far of the working of the Land Act. In his opinion, it was absolutely necessary that such Returns should be published. The Act provided that periodical reports of the proceedings of the Estates Commissioners should be made and laid before Parliament as soon as possible. He did not know what regulations had been made under that section, but if regulations had been issued he had not seen them. If they had not been issued he thought it was a serious omission. It was not right that Parliament should be left for five months absolutely in the dark as to what was going on under the Act. He pressed the right hon. Gentleman to take steps to see that official information was given at the earliest possible moment. Could not the Chief Secretary forestall the official Returns and state what had taken place? In the first place, how many agreements had been filed? Two months had elapsed since the right hon. Gentleman gave them any information on that subject. He desired to know the amount of land and the number of tenants included in those agreements, and also the number of years purchase in those cases. That was a demand which had been made on several occasions, and the excuse put forward was not valid. The Chief Secretary said that this was a new Department, and they must make allowances, and that the information asked for would entail serious trouble, delay, and expense. He could not for the life of him see how all that was possible. If it were possible to make a list of the agreements surely there could not be much increased labour, time, or expense incurred by including the number of years purchase. If the Chief Secretary could not give them now he hoped they would be given at the earliest possible moment. Again, how many of the agreements under the Act came within, and how many outside, the zones? That was a most important point. Could the Chief Secretary tell them if all those cases which fell outside the zones had been inspected and sanctioned by the Estates Commissioners and how many, if any, of the bargains had been objected to by the Estates Commissioners.

The second class of questions he desired to put were with reference to untenanted land. ["Hear, hear!"] It was not his purpose to emphasise the point with which everybody connected with Ireland was familiar, and which the right hon. Gentleman had admitted in many of his speeches last year, namely, that the success of any attempt at settlement of the land question very largely depended upon the power of acquiring untenanted lands. What had been the operation of the Estates Commissioners in this respect, and what untenanted land had they acquired? What was their mode of procedure? Were they waiting for the untenanted land to be brought to them in every case, or did they, when they found the untenanted land was not being offered to them, make any attempt to purchase land by initiating negotiations? He knew that the Chief Secretary's answer would be that when they were talking about buying land they must be careful not to raise the prices exorbitantly, and that if it were known that the Estates Commissioners intended to go all over the country looking for land the price would thereby be raised enormously. That might possibly be one effect, but after all there was no alternative. If the untenanted land would not go to the Estates Commissioners, they must go to get the land, because if the untenanted land was not acquired the whole scheme fell to the ground and would be an unmitigated failure. Information was therefore very necessary on that point.

Another question bringing in that of untenanted land was that of the evicted tenants. What steps were the Estates Commissioners taking with regard to that? He knew the difficulties of the position and did not think he took an unreasonable view of it. Where an estate was being sold it ought to be comparatively easy for the Estates Commissioners to bring about a reinstatement of the evicted tenants. How many such cases had there been, and how many estates were in the process of being transferred from the landlords to the tenants on which there were evicted tenants? The Estates Commissioners had enormous powers in this matter. They could define anything they liked as an "estate." If a person went to them with an estate upon which there was a large number of evicted farmers and was not prepared to deal with them in a way which would enable the tenants to be restored, the Estates Commissioners had power to say they would not sanction the transaction unless the landlord came to some fair arrangement with respect to the evicted tenants. He desired to know how far the Commissioners were using that enormous power. His purpose in asking the question was not to obtain from the Chief Secretary a statement that the Commissioners were doing all they could; he wanted something more precise. How many such cases were there, and in how many of them was there a prospect of the tenants getting back? Were the Estates Commissioners taking steps to ensure that the tenants should get back? What were they doing in cases of evicted tenants where the landlords were not selling their estates? because some of the worst cases were on estates which were not likely to be sold in a hurry. The Estates Commissioners had power to provide farms for those evicted tenants elsewhere if they could not get them back into their own farms. Were the Commissioners taking any steps in that direction? He himself knew of only one estate on which the tenants were likely to get back, and that was the case of the Coolgreany estate in county Wexford, on which all the evicted tenants would be put in the agreement or in some way or other provided for. At any rate most of them would get back at prices agreed upon between the landlords and the local leaders, or priests, as representing the evicted tenants. He took it that the price was a satisfactory one, because he had heard nothing to the contrary. He was glad to know in that case that the houses were to be rebuilt for the evicted tenants and the lands were to be restocked, not by way of loans but by way of free grants, in addition to which the tenants were to receive certain payments by way of wages whilst their houses were being rebuilt, and which would amount to the whole amount of the instalments for several years. That was the only case in Ireland of which he had heard. If there were other cases he hoped the Chief Secretary would mention them; if there were none he had to ask what was the cause of the delay. He was sure that the cause of the delay was not to be found in the Estates Commissioners themselves, at any rate so far as Mr. Bailey and Mr. Finucane were concerned. If they were not taking steps it must be because of some defect in the Act or in the Executive caused by the right hon. Gentleman. He pressed upon the right hon. Gentleman the extreme importance of proceeding rapidly in these matters. There had been the widest disappointment throughout Ireland that this process of restoring evicted tenants had been so slow. There had been no disappointment connected with the Land Act so intense as that repecting the slow operation of these clauses. It needed not only a benevolent but a wise statesman who would take immediate steps to hasten on a settlement. He believed the delay in restoring evicted tenants would act injuriously upon every other operation of the machinery of the Land Act, and he therefore urged the Chief Secretary to see that the Estates Commissioners should realise and exercise the enormous powers they had in this matter, so that in a very short time a large number of the evicted tenants might be restored to their homes.

There was another point he desired to raise, and that was what the Congested Districts Board were doing. They issued periodical reports, but this was a matter in which they ought to submit a special report to Parliament to enable them to discuss the working of the Land Act, for until they had that official information it was impossible for them to have an intelligent discussion at all. Certainly after five or six months working such a report should be made. He desired the right hon. Gentleman to impress upon the Congested Districts Board the desirability of making such a report as soon as possible, and, pending the report, perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would give the information himself. The right hon. Gentleman, at the commencement of the session, told them about the purchase of land by the Congested Districts Board. What further progress had they to report? Had they succeeded in getting into their hands a large amount of untenanted land in the congested districts? He doubted it very much, but he wished it were true. He was afraid that the right hon. Gentleman was experiencing what the Nationalist Members prophesied last year, that it was necessary to invest the Congested Districts Board with compulsory powers—not some general compulsory powers, but such powers in the congested districts as the Board themselves asked for years ago and which the right hon. Gentleman refused last year because he thought they were unnecessary. Experience had shown that without such powers the acquisition of untenanted lands was impossible. He did not wish to censure or criticise the working of the Act; he simply wanted information on the points he had raised, and to press the right hon. Gentleman as strongly as he could to see that reports were immediately issued by these departments. Perhaps they could be issued periodically, say once a month or once in two months, for the future. The right hon. Gentleman should give them all the official information at his disposal, which certainly ought not to be denied to the representatives of Ireland.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said there were one or two Questions which he desired to add to those which had already been put by the hon. and learned Member opposite. He would suggest that the Return referred to by the hon. and learned Member for Waterford might be divided into provinces. There was a Question he wished to put to the Chief Secretary which Irish Members would agree was very important. The Estates Commissioners had absolute discretion as to the definition of an estate. He should be glad to know what line the Commissioners were taking in a multitude of cases such as this:—Landlords in different parts of the country were getting part of their tenants to consent to buy at very good prices—more in fact than they ought to get for the land—and then they tried to put pressure on the other tenants to give the same prices by telling them that, if they did not care to buy on those terms, the Estates Commissioners would divide the estate, and while one part would be sold they would be left in the position of tenants. These landlords were, in fact, attempting to make a chess-board of their estates, part to be sold and part to remain tenanted; and what he wished to know was whether the Estates Commissioners would permit that sort of thing or whether they would refuse to allow land to be called an estate which was engineered in that way. He was afraid the Chief Secretary was tired of hearing about the Land Judge's Court, but he would hear more yet. When the Act was being passed a very salutary provision was inserted that the Estates Commissioners might make a proposal to the Land Judge for the purpose of purchasing estates within the Court. That was hailed by all parties in Ireland as a means of facilitating the sale of bankrupt properties. Would the right hon. Gentleman tell the House what had been done under that section of the Act? How many estates had Judge Ross consented to sell, how many were actually sold, and what efforts had the Estates Commissioners made to carry out that section of the Act? Since the Act of 1896 was passed, great pressure had been put upon the Land Judge's Court to expedite the sale of estates, and he was very glad to think that considerable progress had been made in that direction. But when he reached Dublin on Saturday night he was waited upon by a deputation of clerks. Would the House believe that three clerks in the Receiver's Department, who had been fifteen years in the employment of the Court, married men with families, had been given notice to clear out without a farthing of compensation and very little notice? These men were not Civil servants, and he did not deny that the Treasury was strictly within its rights; but he thought the Chief Secretary should intervene to procure the transfer of these men to the Estates Commissioners' office, where they would naturally be more useful than inexperienced men. They ought not to be turned out in the street at forty or forty-five years of age when it would be very difficult for them to find other employment. He wished to express the opinion in conclusion that monthly reports should be furnished of the work of the Estates Commissioners exactly as were supplied by the Land Commission.

*Mr. ROCHE (Galway, E.) said he desired not only to elicit information from the Chief Secretary but also to impart information to the right hon. Gentleman, and the House, as to the manner in which the Land Act was being worked in the Division he had the honour to represent. There was no Division in Connaught which contained so much untenanted land as East Galway, and on the distribution of that land among the tenants would depend the success of the Act. The Butson Estate in his constituency had been in the Land Judge's Court for a considerable number of years. There were about sixty tenants on the estate, all of whom were willing to purchase; and a fortnight ago they applied in the Land Judge's Court to be allowed to purchase. The Land Judge was willing on condition that £12,000 worth of rich untenanted land should be sold to the mother of the owner who was a minor. Naturally, the tenants refused to purchase. The untenanted land was situated quite two miles away from the demesne, and it was well known that Mrs. Butson was not able to purchase the land herself in consequence of the advance being limited. In May, 1902, Mrs. Butson entered into some agreement with Judge Ross to purchase this land which would have the effect, if carried out, of preventing the tenants from being able to enlarge their holdings; and only a fortnight ago the Land Judge threatened anyone who interfered with the tenants in connection with the sale with all the pains and penalties of his Court. He would contrast that act of the Judge with his action recently when another lady, who was a tenant of the Land Court, refused to purchase her holding unless the sporting rights of the other tenants' holdings were sold to her at an almost nominal price, and this lady is the Land Judge's wife.

*Mr. SPEAKER: I understand that the hon Member is now attacking the action of a Judge in his own Court. That is not in order.

*Mr. ROCHE said he only wished to point out the action which was taken by a Land Judge's wife.

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member appeared to be attacking the action of a Judge.

*Mr. ROCHE said that as the Judge was responsible for his wife's action he would not refer to the matter further. The hon. Member called attention to the course taken with respect to the Comyn Kenny estate, which consisted of grazing lands divided by the landlord into farms of twenty to twenty-five acres, and then put up for competition by advertisements in the local papers and by bills which were posted in the district. He questioned the Chief Secretary as to whether there had been any correspondence between Mr. Comyn Kenny and the Estates Commissioners, and the right hon. Gentleman at first replied that there had been no correspondence, but when further interrogated he stated that Mr. Comyn Kenny had had an interview with the Estates Commissioners, though no correspondence had passed. Was that worthy of anybody representing the Government in Ireland? It was something like what might be expected from a three-card man on a race course. [A Nationalist Member: Thimble rigging.] Other estates, such as the Mahon estate at Ballydonlan, had been treated in the same manner. What the tenants objected to was that the distribution of the grazing lands should be left in the hands of the landlord, the agent, or the receiver. They considered that it was the duty of the Estates Commissioners to purchase the grazing lands and send out some person beyond suspicion and corruption to divide them among the poor people who, under the policy now being pursued, were shut out altogether from the opportunity of getting them. He was convinced that the redistribution of the grazing lands would be the great national question of the immediate future. The Act of Parliament recently passed only raised the question, but another would be required to settle it.

With regard to the evicted tenants, he said that there would never be a settlement of the land question in Ireland until they were reinstated in their old homes, where possible, and when no better homes should be provided for them on the rich untenanted land. If the Chief Secretary were to pass Acts day after day in regard to Irish land there would never be peace in the country until the question of the evicted tenants was settled to the satisfaction of all concerned. The grazing lands on the Clanricarde Estate, from which the tenants were evicted, were in the hands of "planters" many of whom had never paid a penny of rent, although houses had been built for them at considerable expense. There ought to be no difficulty in getting rid of those people and in bringing about a settlement of the evicted tenants question. It was only quite recently that one of those planters who is in possession of nine evicted farms called on him to know if he would purchase his interest in them, which upon investigation appeared to be of no value—hence there should be little difficulty in settling the question.

MR. HEMPHILL (Tyrone, N.) said there was a great feeling of disappointment in Ireland at the slowness with which the Land Act was being worked. It had been in operation for five months, and up to the present there had been no tangible result. This was not the fault of the British Legislature, which had guaranteed out of the Imperial Exchequer a very large sum for the purposes of the Act. He wished to ask the Chief Secretary what was the reason of the delay. There were two possible causes for the delay. It might be that the landlords and tenants had not come together and agreed upon the purchase or sale of farms. If that was the cause it was obvious that the Act of Parliament must be amended either by importing the principle of compulsion, or by altering the present arrangement of the zones. There must be some organic change made in the present Act if the cause of the delay was the coyness of the landlord and tenant to come to an agreement. Another cause of the delay might be the insufficiency of the staff that worked the Act. He had not a word to say except of commendation regarding the Estates Commissioners. If it was necessary to reinforce the staff it would be better to do so than that the whole operation of the Act should hang fire in the way it was doing at present. If, as the hon. Member for South Tyrone had suggested, there was a shortage of clerks or an insufficiency of accommodation, that should be remedied at once. Unless some means were taken for the redistribution of the large grazing lands among the occupying tenants who were prepared to purchase, the Act would produce no economical result to the advantage of Ireland. It was quite idle to suppose that the conversion of small tenants paying £3 or £4 a year of rent into fee-simple proprietors would not produce a great practical result. He would remind the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary that one of the foundations of the agricultural prosperity of England was a series of Acts of Parliament in the Tudor period by which it was forbidden to keep land in pasture to the exclusion of tillage. Therefore, this was no new principle which they wished to be introduced in Ireland in regard to the grass lands of that country. What he wanted to know was, how many estates in Ireland had changed hands under the Act; how much money was actually paid out of the Imperial Exchequer; how much of that money went in the shape of bonuses; and what had really taken place since the Act came into operation on 1st October? He also wished to direct attention to the great block in the Land Judge's Court. They all knew that the Land Judge was very young, active, and energetic; but the block might be due to his being unable to meet the business thrown upon him. It was, however, very easy to supplement his efforts by transferring a Supreme Court Judge to his Court. There was a large staff of Irish Judges, with very little to do, who were quite equal in ability and reputation to the present Land Judge. What a difference there was in the working of this Act from that of the Encumbered Estates Act. That Act was passed to carry out the great policy of relieving Ireland from receivers who were eating the vitals out of the country. The Committee appointed under that Act carried out the policy of the Act; they listened to no delay and sold the estates to the highest bidder, and in four or five years Ireland was freed from the burden of the receivers.

The present block in the Land Court had arisen from that policy not being carried out. That was to the disadvantage of the country and for the sole benefit of the numerous herd of receivers which had again arisen.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) said the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just sat down had asked why the Land Purchase Act had not acted more speedily; but he did not go far enough in his search for the causes of the delay. The hon. Member for South Tyrone said that it was the fault of the landlords, because they were asking exorbitant prices for their land. He doubted that very much. [Ironical cheers from the IRISH Benches.] He knew that his hon. friends opposite thought that the terms asked for by the landlords were exhorbitant in the extreme. He did not believe that the landlords of Ireland were inclined to ask outrageous prices from their tenants. Some landlords, undoubtedly, absolutely refused to sell, but these were the exception. One little difficulty existed, as his hon. friend knew, and that was that limited owners could not sell because they would not get the bonus until the amending Act was passed. That difficulty had unquestionably caused some delay; but if his right hon. friend who represented hon. Members opposite wanted to know why the Act had not proceeded with more expedition, he ought to get his information from Mr. W. O'Brien. If the working of the Act had been left to the influence of the hon. Member for Waterford and to Mr. W. O'Brien he ventured to say that the number of sales and arrangements between landlords and tenants would have been ten times more numerous than they now were. He knew from reading the public Press that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Waterford and Mr. W. O'Brien were honestly desirous to see the Act worked properly. [An HON. MEMBER on the Irish Benches: So we all are.] Then why did Mr. W. O'Brien leave the Party and resign his seat? There might be other reasons, but, from reading the public statements of Mr. W. O'Brien, he believed that that gentleman left the Party because he thought that the Land Purchase Act was not getting fair play. And he thought that was a very good reason. During the whole of the discussion on the land question since the time of the Land Conference, to his mind, the course pursued by Mr. W. O'Brien was that of an honest man who desired to see a settlement that would work well. But there had been other influences at work, as could be seen by anybody who took the trouble to read the *Freeman's Journal*. That paper had great influence and had done its best steadily and persistently to prevent the tenants coming to terms with their landlords.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Well, why have there been fewer sales in Ulster, where the *Freeman's Journal* has no influence, than in any other province of Ireland?

COLONEL SAUNDERSON said he did not understand the meaning of the right hon. Gentleman's Question. The *Freeman's Journal* circulated in all parts of Ireland. Of course it was known that one section of the Irish Party wanted the Act to work successfully and another section did not. He believed that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Waterford had sold his own property under the Act, which was a very good example to other landlords and a proof of his desire that the Act should be successfully carried out. As an Irish landlord he himself was entirely in favour of the successful working of the Act, but it was impossible to deal with his tenants until the amending Act was passed. The original Act passed by this House was, to his mind, one of the most generous Acts ever passed by any Legislature in the world, but it had been made use of for political purposes. He was ready to deal with his tenants in the county of Kerry where he had a great number; and he had explained to them that he was willing to sell them their holdings on certain terms—the terms on which most landlords were willing to sell, viz., that after the sale was completed he should have something near his present income. He had received a notice the other day that if he wanted to sell his property to his tenants he was not to do it direct but through the Land League. What on earth had the Land League to say to his relations with his tenants? His reply was that he absolutely declined to deal with his tenants except directly with themselves. And that was the position taken by the great majority of the other landlords in Ireland. He wished the Act to succeed; and he believed that all the landlords in Ireland were willing to sell on reasonable terms. He believed he was the first Irish landlord who had spoken in this House—in the year 1870, before most of the hon. Gentlemen opposite were born—in favour of an Irish Land Bill—[AN HON. MEMBER on the IRISH Benches: You were a Liberal then.] —and he had always maintained, and he maintained still, that a settlement of the Irish land question could only be accomplished by the occupiers of land in Ireland becoming the owners. He did not agree with hon. Gentlemen opposite. He was convinced that the vast majority of the Irish landlords were willing to sell on terms of honourable dealing, as between man and man.

*MR. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.) said that during the debates on the Land Bill the Chief Secretary stated that he looked forward to the increasing purchase of estates by the Congested Districts Board, and that the Board would pursue a more active policy. He was now anxious to ascertain when they might expect that policy to be adopted. He understood that the Congested Districts Board had taken up the attitude of not initiating any proposal for purchase. At first sight that seemed to be perfectly reasonable, because it might be said that such action could only end in running up the price of the land. But the result was that the very estates which were most in need of being purchased had their sale postponed indefinitely. He had in his mind a particular estate in his own constituency which was in that position. It was a small estate of about 120 tenants, the land was poor mountain land, the holdings were small, and the houses were very wretched. There was also a considerable portion of rough mountain land which had been taken away from the tenants years ago. Last autumn, before the Act was in operation, they asked the agent to forward to the landland the terms on which they would be prepared to purchase and he promised he would, but nothing had since been heard of the matter. The landlord was an absentee, and the only address he could discover was Plymouth, and that only because it figured in the writs which were regularly showered on the tenants. The estate was managed in an extraordinary way. He himself had seen a file of receipts extending back for twenty years, but it was impossible for any particular tenant to know how precisely he stood as regarded his rent since their receipts did not state the rent received up to any specific date, but were issued year after year simply as "on account of debt." That was exactly the sort of estate on which the greatest benefits would accrue from purchase. He was informed that the landlord was now either in the Riviera or at Algiers and the sale of the estate seemed likely to be hung up indefinitely. It was quite obvious that in such a case no private person could initiate negotiations, which, if they were to have any useful issue, must be concerned not only with the existing uneconomic holdings but also with the large area of unoccupied land in the vicinity. In such a case, it was clearly within the province of the public department which was specifically charged with the duty of ameliorating the social condition of such districts to take the first steps to bring about a sale and resettlement of the lands—since they and they alone were in the position to deal with the matter in its entirety.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover) said although he would be able to give some of the information asked for it would be of a somewhat fragmentary and insufficiently digested character.

MR. JOHN REDMOND said he sent the right hon. Gentleman notice that he intended to raise the matter.

MR. WYNDHAM said he did not receive the notice.

MR. JOHN REDMOND said he wrote to the right hon. Gentleman at the Irish Office on the previous day.

MR. WYNDHAM said that, at Questions, he formed the impression that other matters would be raised.

In reply to the hon. Member for West Donegal he quite agreed that these derelict properties were precisely the estates on which the Congested Districts Board could hope to bestow the greatest benefit, but it would be most imprudent on the part of the Board and of the Estates Commissioners to push themselves too much forward in seeking land which was for sale. As a matter of fact, inquiries were being made by both, but as far as possible they were being made very discreetly. In regard to the prospects of the Act, he took a more sanguine view than did the right hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh. He still believed quite as profoundly as last year that, if all Parties to the Act endeavoured to work it in the spirit which animated the debates last year, a very great measure of success would attend its operations. There had been several references to the question of the evicted tenants. He knew of no settled plan on the part of any landlords in Ireland not to deal with the question of the evicted tenants; on the contrary, he had heard from many that they were anxious and ready to deal with it. Repatriation of the evicted tenants was, however, a difficult question which could not be settled as quickly as he would wish it. The right hon. Member for North Tyrone had referred to the Land Judge's Court. That subject was to be dealt with on the first Wednesday after the recess; so he would only now say that Mr. Justice Ross informed him that since 1896 he had sold agricultural land to the value of nearly £3,000,000, without taking into account the sale of non-agricultural hereditaments in towns. His Court was now no longer congested, and, so far from requiring help, he thought that he might be in a position to give help elsewhere at no very distant time. In regard to the specific case mentioned by the hon. Member for East Galway, he could only repeat the statement of fact made by the Land Judge—that the agreement in question was entered into before the Land Act of last year came into operation. It was difficult enough to work the Act, but it clearly was not possible to import into the working of the Act matters which were decided upon before the Act was passed.

MR. ROCHE said that his point was whether the sale would be indefinitely hung up.

MR. WYNDHAM said that the hon. Member would not be surprised if he had not definite information in reference to all the details of the case, but he would make it his duty to inform himself on the matter. The hon. Member for South Tyrone asked for information on the Land Act. He had not that information at his disposal, but he could inform the hon. Gentleman that sales were proceeding in Ulster, and were likely to proceed at a better rate than had hitherto obtained. He had it in mind that a larger number of estates were likely to come into the market in the near future—estates which were situated in South Tyrone and Fermanagh. He had been asked to make a statement as to the lines followed by the Estates Commissioners in dividing estates. But the Estates Commissioners never had divided, and he attached so much importance to preserving intact the discretion of the Estates Commissioners that he was very loth to lay down any rigid rule which could be binding in every instance. Therefore if they laid down a rigid rule that a percentage of the people on the property must agree, that would defeat the object nearest to the hearts of many of the hon. Members opposite—an object which must be achieved if the Act was to be successful. Unless they could secure the tenants on the land, deal with the problem of congestion, and carry out the general concordat arrived at last year, he should not claim that the Act had succeeded. In answer to the hon. Member for South Tyrone he would say that as vacancies occurred on the staff in the Estates Commissioners' office they would be filled up, but at present there were no vacancies. As the work under the Act extended it would be necessary to see that an adequate staff was provided. But they began tentatively as it was their duty. He did not like to stand there and plead for more time, but it had been a difficult matter to staff the financial and administrative work under this Act. He did not himself waste any time, and he was almost continually in negotiation with the Treasury making regulations to govern the administrative procedure under the

Act. The work was not colossal, but it was complex, and not work that ought to be hastily and badly done. The ultimate success of this Act depended upon their making a good beginning.

He would submit to those who were impatient of delay that there were two causes for it which were unavoidable—first, it would have been reckless to have floated a small amount of stock either in December or in January. Indeed, he would have been very glad if he could have withheld the flotation of any until a later date. By holding back until April or May, better prices would have been obtained. Had he postponed it much further, it would have been necessary to ask those who took up stock to pay a large percentage. That would have been injurious, and would have made the stock unpopular. Now that the stock was floated, and he was told very successfully, they could proceed with greater energy and speed in the administration of the Act. The other probable cause of delay was the doubt which had been cast upon the fact that a bonus attached to the sale of untenanted land. That had almost a paralysing effect. Owners of untenanted land would not commence negotiations if they were led to believe that there was not to be a bonus. It was clear that nothing could well be done until that question was decided. It had been said that information ought to be given as to the working of the Act in order that it might be discussed. He fully admitted that contention. Whether it was possible to grant monthly Returns or not he doubted, but he would consider it. If monthly Returns were given they would have to be of a very sketchy character. He would consider the possibility of giving interim Returns, into which he would put as much information as he could. He thought six months would be a convenient period to embrace in such a Return—from November to the end of April inclusive, and he would endeavour to get a Return out in May, including prices. It was, however, very difficult to show what was going on under the Act, as some of the negotiations were in every kind of stage. The applications for advances amounted to £2,000,000, and had come from 4,152 tenants on 250 estates; many bargains had been entered into, but applications had not yet been received from tenants. Of these applying tenants 1,301 came from counties comprising congested districts. As to untenanted land, negotiations were pending for the purchase of 9,500 acres. The Estates Commissioners informed him that, in their opinion, when the question of bonus was settled these negotiations would in the majority of cases be successful. He was not aware of any marked reluctance on the part of the owners to sell untenanted land. He believed it would come into the market when the bonus question was settled. The land, when acquired, would be used for two objects — the restoration of evicted tenants, and for the enlargement of holdings. Not much progress had been made yet in solving the problem of evicted tenants. Sixty-one had been restored and six more were about to be, but in a great number of cases evicted tenants had been restored by landlords prior to sale. A certain number of those restored were on the Coolgreany Estate, but there were sporadic cases where two or three evicted tenants had been dealt with by the owners. He knew of another estate onwhich the evicted tenants question would probably be settled in a short time.

He knew of no inclination on the part of the Irish landlords to go back upon the understanding arrived at last year. The Congested Districts Board had been more successful than the Estates Commissioners. They had purchased altogether 46,881 acres of land for £190,000, of these 21,154 acres were untenanted. That had been only possible because the Congested Districts Board enjoyed an income, and therefore they were able to conclude some bargains by stating that the annual income landlords received from all sources would amount to so and so. They took the risk of paying that amount out of their income until the question of paying a bonus was settled. Why it was possible for the Congested Districts Board to buy more untenanted land than the Estates Commissioners was because the Estates Commissioners had no income at their disposal and would not be able to advance the necessary money until the Bill which he had brought in had been passed into law. He had now dealt with the amount of land and the number of tenants.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND asked whether the right hon. Gentleman could give figures for the other provinces of Ireland similar to those which he had given for Ulster.

Mr. WYNDHAM replied that he had not that information by him; he could only give the total average. He was not going to repeat again to-night what he had often said, viz., that averages might be fallacious. But this was the information at his disposal: on the rents fixed or agreed to since the passing of the Act of 1896—*i.e.*, second-term rents — the average price was 23·7 years for the whole country, and on the rents fixed before 21·8. Then the hon. Member asked him how many cases had been outside the zones. On that he could only give an illustration. It required a good deal of clerical labour. Eighteen hundred and fifty-one cases were taken at random. There were 728 cases of rents fixed since 1896. Of those, fifty-one were outside the zones, all but one of which were sold at a price below the zones. There had been one case of a farm of great value sold above the zones. On the rents fixed prior to 1896, there were 580; twenty-two were outside the zones, and all but five were at a figure below the zone price. The difference of 543 were non-judicial rents, to which the zones did not apply.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND said he asked another question with reference to the zones, viz., whether any of the cases outside the zones had been, on investigation, refused.

Mr. WYNDHAM: To the best of my knowledge and belief—and I think I can speak with confidence — none. He thought the machinery adopted for dealing with cases outside the zones was of a more expeditious character than he ventured to think possible when they were discussing the Bill last year. He did not think there had been—at any rate it had not been brought to his knowledge —much difficulty experienced in these cases. He had endeavoured to give a reply to the specific questions put to him by the hon. and learned Member. He said the Act had been in operation five or six months. It would have been in operation six months at the end of April, and he would endeavour to collect as much information as he could of all the operations under the Act during the six months, and present it to the House at an early date in May, so that, if the hon. and learned Member thought fit to ask the Leader of the House to allocate one day in Supply to a discussion of the Land Commission Estimate, he would take care that he had the information a week or a fortnight before such a day. It was not possible for him to enter into the particular cases which had been raised. Indeed, he deprecated any attempt on his part to do so as a general rule. The duties of the Estates Commissioners were known. He had great confidence in them. Their discretion should be preserved as far as possible, and they should act upon their responsibility and not be dictated to by him in detail. But for the general policy of the Act he was responsible. They were administrative officers open to the criticism of Parliament, and subject to the direction of the House.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.), referring to the statement of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Armagh that the landlords would be prepared to sell if they could get prices which would bring in their present net income, said that if the landlords of Ireland would agree to a full investigation so that the tenants might know exactly what their net incomes were, the tenants would be only too glad to enter into negotiations with them. His object in rising, however, was to call attention to the action of the Lord Chancellor in dismissing from his office a justice of the peace in county Kerry, because he had signed warrants——

*Mr. SPEAKER pointed out that the Lord Chancellor's salary did not come on the Votes, and that it had been frequently ruled that his action could not be criticised in Supply; therefore the question could not be raised on the Appropriation Bill.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL said he desired to raise the question of the salary of the law officers.

*Mr. SPEAKER said the dismissal was the action of the Lord Chancellor, not of the law officers. It was impossible for the matter to be dealt with, except as something done by the Lord Chancellor.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL asked whether the law officers had no responsibility for or control whatever, over, not judicial, but administrative acts done in Ireland by the Lord Chancellor.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.) remarked that the dismissal of a justice of the peace was altogether the Act of the Lord Chancellor.

*Mr. SPEAKER said the fact that the Attorney-General answered Questions on these matters in this House did not affect the ruling that on Supply or on the Consolidated Fund Bill no discussion could take place with regard to the action of the Lord Chancellor. It could be done only by an express Motion. Criticism of the action of Judges could be made only upon an Address.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) asked whether the Lord Chancellor was not dismissable at pleasure and consequently was not his action subject to the control of the Executive Government.

*Mr. SPEAKER replied that, whatever might be the history of the Lord Chancellor's appointment, it was a well-known rule of the House that his action could not be dealt with on the Estimates.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL: Might I ask whether the Attorney-General advised the Lord Chancellor that this justice of the peace acted illegally?

*Mr. SPEAKER: I understand that the right hon. and learned Gentleman has already said that it was entirely the action of the Lord Chancellor.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL suggested that if such advice had been given he would be in order in discussing the matter on the Attorney-General's salary.

*Mr. SPEAKER said that that would not bring the discussion in order. The Lord Chancellor and not the Attorney-General was the responsible Minister.

Mr. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.) desired to ask some questions with regard to the administration of the Land Act. Power was given to the Estates Commissioners. before they sanctioned sales, to make inquiries as to the provision made on the estates for the housing of the agricultural labourers; and under the Labourers Acts they could form schemes, and make representations to the local authorities as to the necessity for carrying those schemes into execution. He desired to know whether with the sale of the Leinster Estate in South Kildare, any such steps had been taken by the Estate Commissioners.

And, it being half-past Seven of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till this Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (TRAMWAYS AND IMPROVEMENTS) BILL (By Order.)

Sir FREDERICK BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said in moving the instruction standing in his name, he would like to put before the House some reasons for the course he proposed to take instead of allowing the matter to be dealt with by the Committee upstairs. In the first place, the only persons who could oppose this matter in the Committee were the road authorities and the frontagers. So far as the former were concerned they were the London County Council, and there were practically no frontagers because there could not be any on Westminster Bridge, whilst on the Embankment there were very few, and such as they were they were not capable of appearing before the Committee. This scheme had been brought before this House periodically ever since 1894, and had always been rejected, and he thought it was not improper to suggest that this

House should confirm its former Acts, and reject the present scheme. There were two reasons why this scheme should not be authorised; first of all, the proposal was unnecessary and would confer no benefit on anyone, and, secondly, if it were proved to be beneficial, it would be, he submitted, unwise to take any steps in regard to the matter before the Royal Commission had reported. Supposing, which he did not for a moment believe, that the scheme was necessary, it would be admitted by everybody who had studied the questions and understood the proposals made that the new scheme could be of no use to anyone until the new streets which the County Council were now making from the Strand to Holborn were completed. It was proposed by the Bill to run a tramway across Westminster Bridge, and then turn to the right at right angles down the Embankment for five-eighths of a mile and stop at Waterloo Bridge. He was prepared to argue that there was no advantage to be gained by this. It was as easy for anyone to get out of a tram on the south side of Westminster Bridge as it was to do so on the north side, and there could be no possible object in carrying the tramway five-eighths of a mile down the Embankment, and that was seen by the fact that the County Council, when they ran 'buses, and the present proprietors of the 'buses which started from the tramway terminus at Westminster did not run them down the Embankment, but up through Parliament Street and Trafalgar Square. Nobody wanted to go that short distance down the Embankment, and if they did he might suggest that the Underground Railway was in existence, with stations at Charing Cross and the Temple. The only possible advantage that could be gained by this tramway, when the new street was constructed, was that it could be connected with that street, and thus enable people living on the south side of the water to come over Westminster Bridge, down the Embankment, and so on to Holborn. Until the new street was constructed this scheme was of no use whatever, and there was no necessity at present to construct it. He would further point out that the Baker Street and Waterloo Electric Railway now under construction would be finished at the end of this year or the beginning of next, and he had been informed that there would be a station in the Westminster Bridge Road, which was the road through which these trams would come, three-eighths of a mile from the bridge, and that people could get out of the trams and go on the Baker Street tube to Trafalgar Square, and so on to their various destinations, either by that tube or by the Metropolitan or District Railways, which by that time would be electrified, and with which it would be connected.

In support of his proposition that this particular scheme would be detrimental to the traffic of this neighbourhood, Sir Frederick quoted police evidence given before the Select Committee of the House of Lords in 1892, and police evidence given in November, 1903, and also the evidence given by Mr. Benn, Chairman of the County Council, and late of the Tramways Committee of that Council. He adduced evidence to show that tramways tended to throw all the other traffic on to the sides of the road, and argued that the utility of the Embankment in such a case would be lost. As to the suggestion that there were no facilities for people who had arrived at the other end of Westminster Bridge getting to their destination, he would point out that 218 omnibuses crossed the bridge every hour, while, so far as Parliament Street and Trafalgar Square were concerned, the number of 'buses that went there from Westminster numbered 500 an hour, which showed that there were great facilities. He contended that the obstruction on the other side of the bridge caused by the terminus of the tramway had been used by the County Council as a lever for the purpose of coming to this House on this question. They had deliberately encouraged the obstruction on the other side in order that they might come to this House and ask it to carry out this fad which they had got into their head. He asked the House under all the circumstances to say that this scheme, which was not a local question but a portion of the great question of London traffic, should be deferred till the Railway Commission had reported upon the whole matter. He begged to move.

*Mr. WHITMORE (Chelsea) seconded the Motion, because he had a similar Instruction upon the Paper relating to a small line of tramway which would connect the existing line at Stangate with the line which was the subject of this Instruction. He admitted that to justify the moving of an Instruction Board Private Bill, it was necessary to show strong reasons. In this case one reason was that in every other thoroughfare of London if the London County Council had proposed to lay down tramways they would have to obtain the assent of the local authorities, but in this particular case the local authority of Westminster had no voice in this matter. In the second place he felt justified in taking this course, because of the exceptional interest of the Victoria embankment to Londoners. It was a unique possession for any city—this riverside space, with its gardens and music, for which the London County Council deserved all credit. It was a pleasant place, where quiet people could stroll or sit on a summer evening; but make it a noisy, arterial thoroughfare with a procession of tram-cars and its charm would disappear. He quite admitted that, if the Traffic Commission were to come to the conclusion that for utilitarian reasons the beautiful boulevard should become a tram-car route, no æsthetic considerations should prevail. But the Commission had not reported; it by no means followed that Westminster Bridge and the Embankment was the best main route for connecting the tram-car services on either side of the river. Surely there was no need for precipitate action, and the House might reasonably wait a few months before giving sanction to a proposal which would spoil one of the most beautiful thoroughfares in London. The hon. Member for Battersea had always been much interested in preserving the beauty and dignity of London, and they had in the Thames Embankment a unique possession in this respect. The London County Council had been doing admirable work in making the Embankment and its gardens not only more beautiful but more popular. He hoped to see some day a great boulevard from Chelsea to Blackfriars, forming a great riverside way with many gardens, which would be an ornament to London, which any city would be proud of, and any population glad to possess. They could never make such a riverside way a direct and quick means of locomotion for arterial traffic because of the natural curves in the course of the Thames. Therefore, with great earnestness, he would ask the hon. Member for North Camberwell and other hon. Members who were supporting this scheme not to be too precipitate about this matter. Surely they might wait a few months until the Royal Commission had reported. He, at any rate, was glad to have an opportunity of doing something to give a vote to arrest a precipitate and a hasty proposal which might be wrong on utilitarian grounds as to ultimate remedy for connecting the populations north and south of the Thames, and which most certainly must do something to impair the very rare charm of a beautiful boulevard.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill to omit Tramway No. 2."—(*Sir Frederick Banbury.*)

Captain NORTON (Newington, W.) said he opposed this Instruction because he knew that for more than half a generation not only the majority of his own constituency, but the majority of the inhabitants of South London had demanded this tramway. In the year 1892 a Bill passed through this House and a Committee upstairs with this object in view, and it was only lost in another place. Was it likely that the London County Council would desire to make this tramway if the people of London as a whole were opposed to it, seeing that they depended for their existence upon the votes of the ratepayers, and ran the risk of an increase in the rates in case the tramway was not a success? He ventured to predict that the opposite would be the case. Having developed the tramways in the North and South of London it had become necessary to connect them, and this for the moment was the best method of doing it. The hon. Baronet the Member for Peckham had pointed out the number of omnibuses which crossed the bridge, and he said that 30,000 foot passengers crossed every day between 8 o'clock in the morning and 8 o'clock in the evening. Seeing that a tramcar could take as many passengers as three 'buses it was evident that this scheme would decrease the traffic over the bridge, and it would furnish an alternative route to the City, and relieve the traffic in Parliament Street and the Strand. The 'buses did not take the route up the Embankment—and why? Because they preferred to go up streets where they could pick up casual fares. It was at one time argued that Westminster Bridge was not strong enough to carry the trams, but hon. Members had now given up that silly objection. The London County Council had the interests of London to serve, Westminster Bridge was of ample width, and the Embankment was intended to relieve the pressure of traffic in Parliament Street and the Strand. As to the Embankment, it was made at a cost of £2,000,000, and was it not absurd to say that full use should not be made of it? As to congestion, all that was suggested was that Middlesex should take its share of it, with its wider bridge and Embankment made for the use of Londoners, North and South. Why should everything be sacrificed to North London and nothing to South London? Tubes had been suggested. South Londoners were to be like Chinamen; they were to be sent underground while those on the other side of the river were to be allowed to breathe the fresh air. The hon. Member for Chelsea spoke of the Embankment as being a fine promenade. That was so, and he presumed that it was intended for the people of London at large, but under present circumstances very few people from North London or from the extreme East or West of London ever saw the Embankment, for the simple reason that they could not conveniently get there, and the same applied to some extent to South London. Under this scheme, if the North and South were connected with a tramway, then there would be a chance of Londoners generally enjoying this beautiful Embankment.

They should also remember that there was a proposal to establish an excellent system of steamers on the river. He thought this tramway scheme would be cheaper and pleasanter than a subway, and they should not forget that a subway would cost £500,000, whereas this tramway would not probably cost one-third of that sum, and it would facilitate 2,000,000 of people in South London getting backwards and forwards to their work, and would distribute the congestion more fairly between those who lived North and South of the river. It would diminish the omnibus traffic, and would be a great convenience to those who had now to change and get out on the Surrey side. Not only this, but it would take people across Westminster Bridge and along the Embankment, and it would thus tap the underground railway. The housing question was closely bound up with the scheme, which would enable people to live further out in the suburbs. They all knew the extreme pressure in the central portion of London had been greatly relieved in reference to the housing problem by the London County Council trams taking people out to Tooting and elsewhere. This scheme would enable people to live further out still, thus relieving the pressure in the inner circle. A complete system of tramways throughout London would produce a considerable revenue to the London County Council which would enable them to make a material decrease in the rates. His constituents for the most part were warehousemen and shop assistants, male and female, and they were bound to go every day either to the City or to the West End in order to gain their livelihood. He had been acquainted with South London for nearly twenty years, and in bad weather he had seen men and women actually fighting to get into omnibuses, and after the fight was over he had seen dozens of women and young girls rushing across the bridge in the hope that they might get to their business in time and in great distress for fear they should lose their situation. Consequently they frequently had to work all day in wet clothes, and there were thousands of women and young girls in London who contracted lung diseases of all kinds in consequence of this defective communication between North and South London. Upon the highest principles of humanity this state of things ought not to be allowed to exist. They were told that a Royal Commission was considering this question, but Royal Commissions were always reporting, and frequently did not report for years. At the present time hundreds and thousands of people were being inconvenienced every day, and it was a monstrous thing to ask them to wait for the Report of the Royal Commission.

MR. COHEN (Islington, E.) said he was not in the least swayed by the argument of the hon. Member for Chelsea. *De gustibus non est disputandum.* So far as he was concerned he saw nothing at all ugly in tramways. On the contrary he thought there would be something very interesting in tramways along the Thames Embankment, provided always that they served a useful purpose in facilitating the migration of the people. It was not on that account that he would support the Motion of his hon. friend. The hon. Member for Newington had said that people from the East End never went along the Embankment. He differed from the hon. Member in that. Times out of number crowds from the East End went along the Embankment on their march to Hyde Park to listen to the oratory of the hon. Member for Battersea. Mr. William Fisher, police superintendent, who gave evidence before the House of Lords Committee, stated that the only means of getting access to that instructive entertainment was the Embankment. It was, therefore, in the interests of liberty of speech and in the interest of the East-Enders, who used the Embankment and wished to be guided in their opinions by the hon. Member for Battersea, that he considered the House should not allow tramways there. He went a little further. He did not consider that the London County Council had any right to promote a Bill seeking to forestall and possibly come in conflict with the Report of the Royal Commission. That Commission was composed of very able commissioners, and he thought the House had a right to expect that at the very latest they would present their Report towards the end of autumn this year. He thought that they should wait for the Report of the Royal Commission. The House would be ill-advised to sanction an arrangement of this kind before the Commission had reported.

*DR. MACNAMARA (Camberwell, N.) said this tramway would be a great boon to the great mass of people living in his constituency. He admired the ingenuity shown by hon. Members who opposed the proposal. He had read the whole of the debates with reference to this scheme since 1891, and most amusing they were. The hon. Member for Chelsea said to-night that this was precipitate action on the part of the County Council. How could he apply the term precipitate to a proposal which was brought forward by the London Tramway Company so long ago as 1891?

MR. WHITMORE said this was not quite the same scheme; but apart from that the proposal was precipitate because of the fact that a Royal Commission was inquiring into the whole question of travelling facilities in London.

*DR. MACNAMARA said this was in essence the same proposal as that of 1891. It was killed on that occasion by two main arguments. The first was that the members of St. Stephen's Club were opposed to it, and the second was that the members of the West End Ratepayers' Association were against it. Of course, there was nothing more to be said. In 1892 the proposal came in under the auspices of the London County Council, and in those days that fact alone was enough to kill it. His hon. friend the Member for Wandsworth said—

> "My main ground of objection is that this Bill is promoted by the London County Council. I hope to show the House before I have done, and in a few minutes, that this Bill is the thin end of the wedge for proposals which, if carried to their logical conclusion, will be of a colossal description, involving London in socialistic experiments for extracting capital from the pockets of those ratepayers who have it and turning it into the pockets of those who have rates to be repaid Heaven knows when."

On that occasion Sir Charles Fraser, the Member for Lambeth, said—

> "Every Member at the present time recognises that but for the attention of the police in Bridge Street we should all be killed every afternoon."

That, of course, again killed it at once. Later, they had the first suggestion of the æsthetic objection. Several Members came forward as the champions of æsthetics and the supporters of the Bill were the Vandals and the Philistines who desired to ravish the slender beauty of Westminster Bridge. The bridge was so beautiful and slender that it was by no means to be ravished by a tram-car, even though hundreds of 'buses might pass over it. The slender beauty of the bridge was vamped up year after year until it would run no longer. In 1902, hon. Members turned their attention to the Embankment. The hon. Member for East Marylebone, in opposing the Bill of that year, said—

> "The enjoyment of those who used the Embankment would be destroyed by the everlasting clang of the gong and the grating of wheels attached to the trams. The beauty of the Embankment, too, would be greatly discounted by the hideous overhead wires. If a *plebiscite* of the inhabitants of London were taken, he would undertake to say that there would be an overwhelming majority against this vandalism and vulgarity."

The hon. Member for Uxbridge said that the scheme was "an attempt to get over the bridge by a sidewind." That settled it at once. Last year came a new argument, "Wait for the Report of the Royal Commission." This year the same argument was doing duty; and so it would go on for years. He had a number of documents which he would read to the House, showing how the opposition to the Bill had been organised. It was purely an omnibus proprietors' opposition. A circular letter issued by Mr. Rickards, hon. secretary of the Jobmaster's Protection Association, was as follows—

> "I am informed that on Monday evening next, at about 9 p.m. in the House, Sir Frederick Banbury, M.P., is moving an Instruction for the opposition of London County Council Tramways over Westminster Bridge and along the Embankment. As this is a matter of the greatest importance to our trade in general (in fact to all persons who drive about London), my Association, representing upwards of 40,000 horses working in the streets of London, would esteem it a great favour if you would make it convenient to be in your seat that evening and support Sir Frederick Banbury's opposition to this scheme."

He had another communication from a gentleman, who, he understood, was a wholesale hay and corn dealer, asking him to oppose the scheme. A communication issued to the shareholders of the London General Omnibus Company had come into his hand. It was in the following terms—

> "I am directed to inform you that the London County Council has again brought forward in the House of Commons its scheme for a tramway over Westminster Bridge. This is most important to the omnibus trade, and my directors will be obliged if you personally will write to your local M.P., or any other Member you may know, urging him to be present in the House on Monday next, the 7th inst., and support Sir Frederick Banbury's Motion against such tramways. As you doubtless know, the Royal Commission on London Traffic is still considering the whole question, and until they report it is absolutely premature to bring forward more tramway schemes."

A communication from Thomas Tilling, Limited, ran as follows—

> "As a shareholder in this company I wish to call your attention to the fact that the London County Council are promoting a Bill in Parliament, one of the proposals in which is to construct a tramway over Westminster Bridge, which, if it succeeds, will seriously affect the earnings of the omnibus portion of the company's business. I would, therefore, ask you to get the Member of Parliament for your district to support Sir Frederick Banbury, Bart., M.P.'s Instruction to the Committee that the tramway in question be omitted from the London County Council's proposed measure. Sir Frederick Banbury's Motion is down for Monday next, 7th March, so that no time should be lost in communicating with your Member."

The opposition to the proposal of the London County Council proceeded mainly from the omnibus companies, and that opposition had been very carefully organised and engineered by them. He should vote for the proposal, whatever might be the Report of the Royal Commission, and hon. Members opposite would vote against it whatever that Report might be. [Cries of "Oh!"] Well, some of them would. The great trouble and inconvenience which working people experienced in getting on the trams at the Westminster Bridge terminus under existing arrangements would be removed if the scheme of the County Council were adopted. It would be an unspeakable boon to the poor working people of North Camberwell, and he pleaded with the House not to refuse it.

*MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD (Liverpool, West Derby) said it was rather unfortunate that a proposal of this kind should be discussed from the point of view of interested motives. He thought it would be much fairer to discuss the proposal on its merits. He said that the proposal in the Bill was that there should be a connecting link between the two systems of tramways, so as to have a continuous route from the north to the south of London. Before the House decided against that proposal, and adopted the Instruction of the hon. Baronet, there ought to be some weighty argument put before the House to show why the London County Council should not make that connecting link. It was said that there was no necessity for a continuous route. Now he had been a member and chairman of the Tramways Committee of the Liverpool Corporation, which had the most successful system of tramways in England, and therefore he claimed to know what would be the conveniences and inconveniences involved in a continuous route. Their experience in Liverpool was that a continuous route presented the greatest advantages to the community. It was found that if there was excessive traffic for a short distance in the middle of a long route and special cars were put on simply for the portion where the excessive traffic existed these did not accommodate the public, whereas cars which ran from end to end of the route did. It was stated by the supporters of the Instruction that there was no evidence of any traffic from north to south, or *vice versa*; but no sensible person who looked at the traffic on Westminster Bridge would deny that such a statement was unfounded. A third objection to the London County Council's proposal was that an alternative scheme was in existence, viz., a proposed tube railway; but that was no reason against the London County Council's scheme for making a continuous route in the open air across the bridge. Another objection was that this scheme would spoil the Embankment for fast traffic; but he contended that it would do nothing of the sort, and that the electric trams being themselves in the nature of fast traffic would rather assist the other fast traffic. It was perfectly preposterous to say that this connecting link would, as alleged, prevent members of the Royal College of Physicians from examining their patients. He insisted that the scheme of the County Council to do away with two termini, both of which must cause congestion, and to make the route continuous from north to south, thus avoiding the congestion necessarily involved in the existence of a terminus, would prevent the existing congestion at the south end of Westminster Bridge. He had examined all the evidence, and had come to the conclusion that the London County Council were grappling in earnest with the serious problem of the congestion of traffic in the streets of London, and the House should hesitate before it interfered with the legitimate work of that important body.

*MR. BURDETT-COUTTS (Westminster) said that his hon. friend the Member for Chelsea had referred to the circumstances under which the City of Westminster had no voice or representation in the consideration of this matter; and that fact justified him in taking part in the debate. It was rather remarkable that the local authority should have no *ocus standi* in regard to a proposal which dealt with its own area. The City Council of Westminster considered that this tramway would be a great obstruction to locomotion. He supported the Instruction, but he should not do so if he were convinced that it would interfere in any way with the extension of the facilities of locomotion in London, or if he thought a tramway was the only way of relieving the daily inconvenience of the working classes who had to cross the bridge on foot. He approached this subject from the point of view, not whether increased facilities for locomotion for London were needed, but whether this proposal of the London County Council was the best means to promote these increased facilities. His contention was that the action of the London County Council in promoting this Bill was premature and utterly unreasonable, when the Royal Commission to which the whole question of London locomotion had been formally committed for consideration was taking evidence week after week upon this very point of the advisability or inadvisability of carrying a tramway over Westminster Bridge, and had not yet reported. Why should the House be called upon to forestall the decision of the Royal Commission, and to discredit or disregard the evidence laid before it? His experience did not incline him to place an inordinate value on the decisions of Royal Commissions, but there were Royal Commissions and Royal Commissions; and the present Royal Commission on London Traffic was a very good one, and was taking evidence in an impartial manner. He deprecated very much the tone adopted by the hon. Member for Camberwell as to the opposition which that hon. Gentlemen said had been engineered against the Bill. He wanted to know exactly what the hon. Member meant by his remarks. Did he mean that that opposition was any other than the ordinary opposition which was always organised by any trade or industry injuriously affected by a Bill before that House, or did he mean that it was organised in some improper way to unduly influence Members of that House? [Dr. MACNAMARA: Both.] Very well. He personally looked at the question entirely apart from the interests of any trade, and he thought the hon. Member ought to give every hon. Member of that House credit for freedom from such undue influence. The hon. Member proceeded to describe the ingenuity of the objectors in finding reasons against this proposal. But that did not compare with the ingenuity of the promoters in finding arguments for it. This proposal had been before the House for many years, and during the greater part of that time all that had been heard in favour of it was that it would carry passengers across the bridge to the City; but that argument fell to the ground when it was shown that the passengers who crossed over the bridge did not enter the omnibuses going to the City. And of all the thousands of omnibuses crossing Westminster Bridge either now when omnibus proprietors were looking everywhere for new routes, or formerly when these omnibuses belonged to the County Council, not a single one had ever turned to the right towards the City. That argument, so long relied on, having failed, the promoters turned to a new one. The new street from the Strand to Holborn with a shallow tramway below came as a *deus ex machina* to the promoters of this Bill, and they thought that that was an argument for carrying the tramway over Westminster Bridge. He was not going to deny that the linking up of the tramways north and south would be an advantage, but this he believed should be done by a tunnel or tube under the river. The House ought to look at the real object of getting a tramway across the bridge, which was to run trams through the already overcrowded streets of the West End. All evidence showed that tramways in the centre of London were the greatest cause of the congestion of traffic. The rigidity of their lines made it impossible to wind through a crowd; and expert opinion, he believed, had come to the conclusion that the real solution of this difficult problem of London locomotion would be found to be tube railways for long distances, motor-buses for short ones in the central area, and trams in the less crowded streets and roads of the outer area.

They had an endless amount of testimony that the omnibus possessed greater facilities for moving amongst traffic than the tramway. This proposal would put on one side the valuable evidence obtained by the Commission, and would declare that tram lines were the best means of locomotion in the crowded streets in the centre of London. He, for one, could not accept that view, and he submitted that before sanctioning this scheme the House should await the Report of the Royal Commission on the question of street traffic.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) thought it a remarkable commentary on the ways of the House of Commons that it should be engaged not with high Imperial matters but in debating at that hour parish pump politics, which, had they concerned any other body than the London County Council, would have been left to be settled by the local authorities concerned. It was the London County Council alone among municipalities whose wishes were to be ignored when it sought the material interests of the vast population whom it served. Johannesburg and Jerusalem could do as they pleased, but whenever the poor London County Council wished to give effect to the material interests of the vast population it served it was tabooed and ignored. What were the facts of this case? The opposition to the Bill was limited to about fifty omnibus proprietors, reinforced by certain promoters of tube railways from the other side of the Atlantic and in the interests largely of alien shareholders. The tube promoters had joined the omnibus proprietors solely because they feared the trams would interfere with their business between Westminster, Charing Cross, and Blackfriars. The House ought not to defer to pushful promoters from the other side of the Atlantic, and thereby prevent the municipality of London from giving its vast population rapid means of transit from north to south. Another interest had expressed itself that night—the interest of a *bonâ fide* public represented by the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down — that was, the fashionable area of Westminster and Belgravia, whose inhabitants did not want the poor of London to come across the river. But the people of London wanted to go north and south by tramway, and they ought not to be resisted by fashionable caprice or transient prejudice. Why should Westminster object? The Council had within the last four years voted a million of money for one street almost within the precincts of Parliament, and they had also street improvements for Westminster and the Strand alone. The workmen in the south of London had a right to their *quid pro quo*, and they preferred to take it in the shape of ½d. tram fares between Westminster and Lambeth. The hon. Baronet the Member for Peckham was of course opposing the Bill. He admired the hon. Gentleman's consistency, but he was afraid he would soon enjoy it in splendid isolation. The hon. Member came from a district in which, out of forty Unionist candidates who stood at the last County Council election in South London, five only were returned. "Mene, mene, tekel upharsin." Let him read the handwriting on the wall. The hon. Member's reasons for opposing the Bill were certainly not endorsed by his own constituents. It was argued that the omnibuses did not use the Embankment. The answer was that the Embankment was not a good route in which to get their passengers. But the same rule did not apply to tramway traffic. In the case of tramways it was a question of through passengers. The hon. Member for Westminster had done splendid service by his action in connection with the hospitals of South Africa. Let him exercise his charity a little nearer home. There was, under the present circumstances, much congestion in the neighbourhood of the Nelson Column.

Mr. BURDETT-COUTTS: That is not in my constituency.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: It is next door to it. Let the hon. Member note what was daily occurring near the Nelson Column. Young women could be seen fighting with young men to obtain entrance to omnibuses. It was a sad sight, and a recent development in London, due, he feared, to the growth of papers like the *Daily Mail.* He noticed that nearly every young man who pushed a woman aside had a copy of the *Daily Mail* in his hand. If these trams were laid all that pushing would cease, and the congestion of traffic would be got rid of. The objection had been raised to tramways that they preserved a rigid line. But nearly all motorists supported the Bill on that very ground, preferring traffic about the conduct of which there was no uncertainty to the three thousand omnibuses which plied in the streets. The congestion which now prevailed on the south side of the river was due to the fact that the terminus was there, and would be greatly diminished if a through system of tramways were established. Colonel Yorke had given very strong evidence in favour of this scheme. The Member for Peckham, however, preferred to rely on the testimony of a police inspector. Had he noticed that his name was "Novice"? Even that inspector, however, admitted that large numbers of accidents occurred at the Westminster tram terminus, and that the remedy was to carry the trams across the bridge.

Mr. MALCOLM (Suffolk, Stowmarket): What is it going to cost?

Mr. JOHN BURNS: £60,000 or £70,000. The question of cost does not need consideration for the tramway system is a remunerative undertaking. He asked Parliament to think imperially on this subject. The broad issue was whether the bridge affording communication between the north and the south of London should be opened for traffic. The County Council were prepared to defer to the opinion of the police and to the public convenience as to the particular part of the road on which the tramway should be constructed, and under these circumstances he could not see any occasion for opposing the Bill. The omnibus proprietors—not the men—constituted the only reason, and in his opinion they ought not to be allowed to prevent London having that system of traction across the river which the Bill provided and which was so generally desired.

SIR GEORGE BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said he had always voted for this tramway until last year, because he thought there should be a line of communication between north and south. He was quite aware of the great hardship the people had to suffer in changing at the end of the Westminster Bridge Road. Circumstances, however, had convinced him that this was a great question, which must be considered as a whole. The condition of London traffic had been referred to a Commission, and he was convinced that the only way in which efficient means of communication could be established throughout London was to look at this problem as a whole. The difficulty was due to the system having grown up in this accidental way, and there was no uniformity in it. He did not think it was fair to quote individual sentences from the evidence which had been given before the Commission to show the opinion of any members of that Commission. The hon. Member for Battersea had referred to the chairman's opinion, but the chairman of that Commission had not given any opinion, and he had only asked questions, and to infer from his questions that he was in favour of this or that tramway was not fair. He was certainly of opinion that the only way to remedy congestion was to have communication right through. He should, however, ask that this matter should be delayed until the Report of the Commission, which was sitting now two days a week considering this enormous problem. The Commission had been sitting for over a year, and he believed they would report before the end of this year, and the question would then be in a proper shape to be considered. It would be very much to be regretted if this most important problem was forestalled by the adoption of this scheme. He therefore urged the House to wait for this Commission to give a general Report upon the whole question of London traffic.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 159; Noes, 131. (Division List No. 70.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood,Capt.Sir Alex. F.
Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Allsopp, Hon. George
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A.J.(Manch'r
Balfour,RtHnGerald W.(Leeds
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Beach,Rt.Hn.SirMichael Hicks
Bignold, Arthur
Bigwood, James
Bond, Edward
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Campbell, John (Armagh, S.)
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cavendish, V.C.W. (Derbyshire
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Chamberlain,RtHn.J.A.(Worc.
Chapman, Edward
Charrington, Spencer
Coates, Edward Feetham
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cox, Irwin Edward Bainbridge
Craig,CharlesCurtis(Antrim,S.)
Crossley, Rt. Hon. Sir Savile
Cullinan, J.
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Davenport, William Bromley
Delany, William
Devlin, Joseph (Kilkenny, N.)
Dewar, SirT.R.(TowerHamlets
Dickinson, Robert Edmond
Dickson, Charles Scott
Dimsdale,Rt.Hon.Sir Joseph C.
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph
Dixon-Hartland,SirFred Dixon
Doogan, P. C.
Dorington, Rt.Hon. Sir JohnE.
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir William Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt.Hon.SirWilliam Hart
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fardell, Sir T. George.
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Fison, Frederick William
Flower, Sir Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster,Philip S.(Warwick,S.W.
Fyler, John Arthur
Gibbs, Hon. A. G. H.
Gilhooly, James
Gore, Hon.S.F.Ormsby-(Linc.)
Goschen, Hon. George Joachim
Graham, Henry Robert
Greene,Henry D.(Shrewsbury)
Hambro, Charles Eric
Hamilton,Marq.of(L'nd'nderry
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Heath, Arthur Howard(Hanley
Heath, James (Staffords. N.W.
Heaton, John Henniker

Helder, Augustus
Henderson, Sir A.(Stafford, W.)
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hickman, Sir Alfred
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J.F.(Sheffield, Brightside
Howard, J.(Midd., Tottenham)
Hozier, Hon. James Henry Cecil
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Hunt, Rowland
Kenyon, Hon. Geo. T.(Denbigh)
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (Salop.
Kilbride, Denis
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Glasgow)
Lawson, John Grant(Yorks. N.R
Lee, Arthur H.(Hants., Fareham
Lees, Sir Elliott (Birkenhead)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Bristol, S.)
Lowther, RtHnJ W (Cum. Penr.
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacIver, David (Liverpool)
M'Fadden, Edward
M'Hugh, Patrick A.
M'Killop, James (Stirlingshire)
M'Killop, W. (Sligo, North)
Manners, Lord Cecil
Maxwell, W.J.H (Dumfriesshire
Milner, Rt. Hon. Sir Frederick G.
Milvain, Thomas
Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
Morgan, David J.(Walthamstow
Murray, RtHn. A. Graham(Bute
Nicholson, William Graham
Nolan, Joseph (Louth, South)
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Malley, William
Palmer, Walter (Salisbury)
Percy, Earl
Pierpoint, Robert
Pilkington, Colonel Richard
Plummer, Walter R.
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Randles, John S.
Reddy, M.
Reid, James (Greenock)
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renwick, George
Ridley, S. Forde(Bethnal Green
Ritchie, Rt. Hon. Chas. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (Sheffield)
Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
Roche, John
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Seely, Charles Hilton (Lincoln)
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Sheehy, David
Sinclair, Louis (Romford)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Stanley, Rt. Hon. Lord (Lancs.)
Stewart, Sir Mark J. M'Taggart
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Tollemache, Henry James
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw. M.
Tuff, Charles
Valentia, Viscount
Walrond, Rt. Hn. Sir William H.
Warde, Colonel C. E.
Webb, Colonel William George
Whiteley, H.(Ashton und. Lyne
Wilson, John (Glasgow)
Wilson-Todd, Sir W.H.(Yorks.)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E.R. (Bath)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.

Tellers for the Ayes—Sir Frederick Banbury and Mr. Whitmore.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, Charles P.
Arnold-Forster, Rt. Hn. Hugh O.
Asher, Alexander
Atherley-Jones, L.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Bayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bhownaggree, Sir M. M.
Black, Alexander William
Boland, John
Brigg, John
Broadhurst, Henry
Bryce, Rt. Hon. James
Bull, William James
Burns, John
Butcher, John George
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Causton, Richard Knight
Cawley, Frederick
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Cremer, William Randal
Crombie, John William
Crooks, William
Cross, Alexander (Glasgow)
Davies, Alfred (Carmarthen)
Dobbie, Joseph
Donelan, Captain A.
Duncan, J. Hastings
Edwards, Frank
Ellice, Capt EC (S. Andrw'sBghs
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Fergusson, Rt. Hn. Sir J.(Manc'r
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
Fuller, J. M. F.
Gardner, Ernest
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gordon, Hn. J.E.(Elgin& Nairn)
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir John Eldon
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Grant, Corrie
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Guthrie, Walter Murray
Harcourt, Lewis V.(Rossendale
Hayden, John Patrick
Hemphill, Rt. Hon. Charles H.
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (Bristol, E.)
Horniman, Frederick John
Hoult, Joseph
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, William(Carnarvonshire
Jordan, Jeremiah
Kearley, Hudson E.
Lambert, George
Langley, Batty
Law, Hugh Alex. (Donegal, W.)
Lawrence, Sir Joseph(Monm'th)
Lawrence, Wm. F. (Liverpool)
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cornwall)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, David
Lough, Thomas
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
M'Arthur, William (Cornwall)
M'Crae, George
M'Laren, Sir Charles Benjamin
Malcolm, Ian
Markham, Arthur Basil
Montagu, G. (Huntingdon)
Montagu, Hon. J. Scott (Hants.)
Moore, William
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morrell, George Herbert
Moulton, John Fletcher
Mount, William Arthur
Murphy, John
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James(Wicklow, W.)
Power, Patrick Joseph
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Pym, C. Guy
Rea, Russell
Redmond, John E.(Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Ridley, Hon. M.W.(Stalybridge
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L.(Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Saunderson, Rt. Hn. Col. Edw. J.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Smith, Samuel (Flint)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Stevenson, Francis S.
Sullivan, Donal
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred(Merthyr)
Thomson, F. W. (York, W. R.)
Thornton, Percy M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips

Tritton, Charles Ernest
Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Eugene (Clackmannan)
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Weir, James Galloway
Welby, Sir Charles G.E.(Notts.)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitley, J. H. (Halifax)
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid.)
Wood, James
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Dr. Macnamara and Mr. Watson Rutherford.

Motion made and Question put, "That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill to omit Tramway No 2A." (*Mr. Whitmore.*)

The House divided:—Ayes, 161; Noes, 123. (Division List No. 71.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir Alex. F.
Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Allsopp, Hon. George
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A.J.(Manch'r
Balfour, Rt Hn. Gerald W.(Leeds
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir Michael Hicks
Bignold, Arthur
Bigwood, James
Bond, Edward
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Burke, E. Haviland
Campbell, John (Armagh, S.)
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cavendish, V.C.W. (Derbyshire
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Chamberlain, Rt Hn. J. A.(Worc.
Chapman, Edward
Charrington, Spencer
Coates, Edward Feetham
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cox, Irwin Edward Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis(Antrim, S.
Crossley, Rt. Hon. Sir Savile
Cullinan, J.
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Davenport, William Bromley
Delany, William
Devlin, Joseph (Kilkenny, N.)
Dewar, Sir T.R.(Tower Hamlets
Dickinson, Robert Edmond
Dickson, Charles Scott
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Doogan, P. C.
Dorington, Rt. Hon. Sir John E.
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Doxford, Sir William Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir William Hart
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
Fergusson, Rt. Hn. Sir J.(Manc'r
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Fison, Frederick William
Flower, Sir Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, Philip S.(Warwick, S.W.
Fyler, John Arthur
Gibbs, Hon. A. G. H.
Gilhooly, James
Gore, Hon. S. F. Ormsby-(Linc.)
Goschen, Hon. George Joachim
Graham, Henry Robert
Greene, Henry D. (Shrewsbury)
Hambro, Charles Eric
Hamilton, Marq. of(L'nd'nderry
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harris, F. Leverton(Tynemouth
Heath, Arthur Howard (Hanley
Heath, James (Staffords. N. W.
Heaton, John Henniker
Helder, Augustus
Henderson, Sir A. (Stafford, W.)
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hickman, Sir Alfred
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F.(Sheffield, Brightside
Hozier, Hon. James Henry Cecil
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Hunt, Rowland
Kenyon, Hon. Geo. T.(Denbigh)
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W.(Salop.
Keswick, William
Kilbride, Denis
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Glasgow)
Lawson, John Grant(Yorks. N.R
Lee, Arthur H.(Hants., Fareham
Lees, Sir Elliott (Birkenhead)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter(Bristol, S.)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
M'Arthur, Charles (Liverpool)
M'Fadden, Edward
M'Hugh, Patrick A.
M'Killop, James (Stirlingshire)
M'Killop, W. (Sligo, North)
Manners, Lord Cecil
Maxwell, W. J. H.(Dumfriesshire
Milner, Rt. Hon. Sir Frederick G.
Milvain, Thomas
Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
Morgan, David J.(Walthamstow
Nicholson, William Graham
Nolan, Joseph (Louth, South)
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Malley, William
Palmer, Walter (Salisbury)
Percy, Earl
Pierpoint, Robert
Pilkington, Colonel Richard
Plummer, Walter R.
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Randles, John S.
Reddy, M.
Reid, James (Greenock)
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renwick, George
Ridley, S. Forde (Bethnal Green
Ritchie, Rt. Hon. Chas. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (Sheffield)
Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
Roche, John
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Seely, Charles Hilton (Lincoln)
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Sheehy, David
Sinclair, Louis (Romford)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Stanley, Rt. Hon. Lord (Lancs.)
Stewart, Sir Mark J. M'Taggart
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Tollemache, Henry James
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw. M.
Tuff, Charles
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Walrond, Rt. Hn. Sir William H.
Warde, Colonel C. E.
Webb, Colonel William George
Whiteley, H.(Ashton und. Lyne
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, John (Glasgow)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E.R.(Bath)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Whitmore and Sir Frederick Banbury.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.)
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, Charles P.
Asher, Alexander
Atherley-Jones, L.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Bayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bhownaggree, Sir M. M.
Black, Alexander William
Boland, John
Brigg, John
Broadhurst, Henry
Bryce, Rt. Hon. James
Bull, William James
Burns, John
Butcher, John George
Caldwell, James
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Causton, Richard Knight
Cawley, Frederick
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Cremer, William Randal
Crombie, John William
Crooks, William
Cross, Alexander (Glasgow)
Davies, Alfred (Carmarthen)
Dobbie, Joseph
Donelan, Captain A.
Duncan, J. Hastings
Edwards, Frank
Ellice,CaptEC(St.Andrw'sBghs
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
Fuller, J. M. F.
Gardner, Ernest
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.HerbertJohn
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gordon,Hn.J.E.(Elgin &Nairn)
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir John Eldon
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Grant, Corrie
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Guthrie, Walter Murray
Harcourt, Lewis V.(Rossendale
Hayden, John Patrick
Hemphill, Rt. Hon. Charles H.
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hobhouse, C.E. H. (Bristol,E.)
Horniman, Frederick John
Hoult, Joseph
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones,William (Carnarvonshire
Jordan, Jeremiah
Kearley, Hudson E.
Lambert, George
Langley, Batty
Law, Hugh Alex. (Donegal, W.)
Lawrence,Sir Joseph(Monm'th)
Lawrence, Wm. F. (Liverpool)
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cornwall)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, David
Lough, Thomas
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
M'Arthur, William (Cornwall)
M'Crae, George
M'Laren, Sir Charles Benjamin
Malcolm, Ian
Markham, Arthur Basil
Montagu, G. (Huntingdon)
Montagu,Hon. J. Scott(Hants.)
Moore, William
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morrell, George Herbert
Mount, William Arthur
Murphy, John
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary,Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor,James (Wicklow,W.)
Power, Patrick Joseph
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Pym, C. Guy
Rea, Russell
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Ridley,Hon. M. W.(Stalybridge
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Saunderson,Rt. Hn.Col.Edw.J.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Thomas (Hawick, B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Smith, Samuel (Flint)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Stevenson, Francis S.
Sullivan, Donal
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Thomas,Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas,DavidAlfred(Merthyr)
Thomson, F. W. (York, W. R.)
Thornton, Percy M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Eugene (Clackmannan)
Wason,John Cathcart (Orkney)
Weir, James Galloway
Welby,Sir Charles G.E.(Notts.)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitley, J. H. (Halifax)
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid.)
Wood, James
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Noes—Dr. Macnamara and Mr. Watson Rutherford.

TELEGRAPH (MONEY) BILL.

(Second Reading.)

Order for Second Reading read.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton) formally moved the Second Reading of the Bill.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. J. H. LEWIS (Flint Boroughs) expressed his satisfaction that a Bill of this kind had been introduced, because he hoped that under it a remedy would be found for a grievance under which his constituents suffered. The boundaries of the Holywell telephone area could not be defended on any principle whatever. The boundary included the towns of Holywell, Greenfield, and Bagillt—an urban community of 8,000 or 9,000 inhabitants; then it went across the mountains to the Vale of Clwyd, down the middle of the Vale, dividing it in a most extraordinary manner, as far as a point near Bodfari, and then back over the mountains to Holywell. Holywell was completely separated from other telephone areas, to the great inconvenience of the people of the district.

Appeals had been made time after time to various Postmaster-Generals, but without success. If the right hon. Gentleman would only look into the matter he would see that the area was a perfectly absurd one. The question excited considerable interest locally; it undoubtedly constituted a substantial grievance, which he hoped means would be found of remedying under this Bill.

Lord STANLEY promised to look into the matter at once and communicate with the hon. Member. He ventured to appeal to the House to allow the Second Reading to be taken; it was necessary that this stage should be taken at the present Sitting, and several hon. Members desired to discuss the next Order on the Paper.

Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) complained that no explanation had been made of the Bill.

Lord STANLEY said that at the request of several hon. Members he made his explanatory statement on the money Resolution in Committee.

Mr. WEIR urged the right hon. Gentleman to see that in any negotiations that might ensue the National Telephone Company did not get the best of the bargain. He also asked whether Scotland was likely to participate in any benefit which might accrue from the Bill.

Lord STANLEY said that according to his experience Scotland generally managed to get her share.

Mr. WEIR feared the contrary was too often the case. Scotland fared far worse than Ireland, but things would be very different if she had a solid phalanx of eighty Members to press her claims.

Bill read a second time and committed for Monday next.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1)) BILL.

[Second Reading.]

Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [24th March], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Mr. KILBRIDE (resuming his speech) asked whether the attention of the Estates Commissioners would be directed to the housing provisions of the Land Act before they came to a final conclusion. The debate had been initiated for the purpose, not of criticising the action of the Estates Commissioners, but of obtaining information so that the country might know how the Land Act was working. There were many questions on which more light was wanted. Would the Estates Commissioners of their own initiative approach a new tenant to ascertain whether he was willing to accept compensation and leave the farm? Or where a new tenant had purchased under former Land Acts and the farm might be regarded as an estate, would a similar course be taken by the Estates Commissioners? He pressed the right hon. Gentleman to use his influence with Lord Dunraven with a view to getting him to interest himself in the evicted tenants of Glynn, county Limerick. He did not desire to go into any further details on that subject; it had been mentioned more than once in the Press; and if the right hon. Gentleman would make inquires he would probably find that the friendly intervention of Lord Dunraven would have a salutary effect. A further question was whether, in the case of sales in Connaught, the Estates Commissioners had sanctioned, or would sanction, the sale of property on which there were any number of uneconomic holdings; or whether, if the landlord had another estate in the neighbourhood on which there was a good deal of untenanted land, they would refuse to sanction the sale of the one without the other so that the uneconomic holdings would disappear. The particular case he had in mind was that of the O'Conor Don's estate. He further complained of an alleged inconsistency in replies given by the Department to certain Questions put by the hon. Member for East Galway. The officials of the Department ought to be more careful to see that the information supplied to the right hon. Gentleman was accurate.

MR. WYNDHAM thought hon. Members were making far too much of the incident referred to. The question put to him was whether there had been a correspondence with the Estates Commissioners. That conveyed to his mind the idea of a business correspondence between the Estates Commissioners and the landlord in question. He stated that there had been none, and that was the fact. A letter was then sent to him saying that this landlord had had a conversation with the Estates Commissioners. That was quite true, and he was much in favour of the landlords putting themselves in touch with the Estates Commissioners in an informal manner. But the two matters were wholly distinct.

MR. ROCHE said that the question he put was whether this landlord was correct in stating that his mode of procedure had the sanction of the Estates Commissioners, and the reply given was that there had been no correspondence or communication whatever.

MR. KILBRIDE had no objection to landlords who did not understand the Act corresponding with the Estates Commissioners for the purpose of obtaining enlightenment. What he complained of was that the Department in Dublin, in sending a reply to the right hon. Gentlemen, should give what was undoubtedly a true answer, but not the whole truth, thereby placing the Chief Secretary in a false position. He was not at all satisfied with the manner in which the office of the Estates Commissioners was managed. It was very short-handed, and he understood that the Chief Secretary had complained of the difficulty he experienced in getting from the Treasury sufficient money for the clerical work.

MR. WYNDHAM said he had made no complaint of the Treasury. What he had said was that they started the office with a staff which would certainly not be big enough when the operations developed.

MR. KILBRIDE said the impression given was that the right hon. Gentleman had found difficulty in getting from the Treasury sufficient money for the proper carrying on of the work. Were the clerks Civil servants? If not, by whom had they been recommended for appointment? The successful working of the Act would largely depend on the *personnel* of those who had the carrying out of its details, and yet it was said in Dublin that when it came to the question of appointing secretaries the Estates Commissioners were not allowed to appoint the men they desired to appoint and in whom they had full confidence, but that Sir John Franks, the Secretary of the Land Commission, insisted on making the appointments. One other point to which he wished to refer arose in connection with the Leinster estate. The greater part of that estate was composed of agricultural land, but there were certain town holdings, and he desired to know whether such an estate would be sold as a whole. The same point rose in the case of Castlereagh. These questions were exercising the public mind in Ireland, and he hoped the right hon. and learned Gentleman would endeavour to supply the desired information.

Mr. POWER (Waterford, E.) referred to a Question placed on the Paper with regard to the trial in Mayo of two police constables for perjury. The constables had sworn that——

Mr. ATKINSON remarked that it was hardly fair to discuss a charge while proceedings were pending.

Mr. POWER said he desired not to discuss the charge, but to ask what procedure the Crown had adopted.

Mr. ATKINSON said that no summonses had yet been served or witnesses examined. The men would be brought up in the ordinary way next month.

Mr. POWER said that if the right hon. and learned Gentleman would guarantee that all the parties would be examined, that was all he wanted.

Mr. ATKINSON said the hon. Member surely did not expect him to state how the proceedings would be conducted or what witnesses examined in a pending prosecution. It was absolutely impossible for him to give such information. He would take care that all necessary, proper, and reliable witnesses were brough t orward to sustain the charge. The prosecution was under his care, and the hon. Member could rest assured that everything would be done to secure the proper administration of justice.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork County, N.) said he wished to call attention once more to the practice of jury-packing in Ireland. At a recent assizes, the Lord Chief Baron, referring to men who had been ordered to stand aside, had used the following remarkable words—

> "What is the use of keeping men here when they are never allowed to serve?"

Surely after such an expression from so high an authority the practice of ordering jurors to stand aside would be abandoned by the Crown. The practice had grown into such a persistent habit on the part of the Crown prosecutors, that it was followed even in the smallest of cases, and resulted in what he contended was a prostitution of justice. Jurors were brought at their own expense from remote parts of the country; they had to remain in the city several days; if they did not appear they were liable to be heavily fined, and then when they went to enter the box they were told to stand aside, the implication being their oath was not to be relied upon, and that they would not try the case in a fair and impartial manner.

Mr. ATKINSON said it was not only inaccurate but ridiculous to suggest that a charge of perjury was conveyed against any juror who was ordered to stand aside. The same power was given to the prisoner, as to the Crown, to challenge jurors to whom objection was taken. So necessary was this right in Ireland if a fair jury was to be secured, that even in civil cases it had been found necessary to give the right to challenge six jurors.

Mr. MACVEAGH (Down, S.) asked why jurors were not challenged in the North of Ireland.

Mr. ATKINSON said that was an amusing inquiry, seeing that there had not occurred elsewhere a case in which so many jurors had been ordered to stand aside as happened at a trial in Belfast two yeare ago.

Mr. MACVEAGH asked the name of the case to which the right hon. and learned Member referred.

Mr. ATKINSON said he referred to the case of the man Trew. The hon. Member for Cork was quite mistaken in supposing that the Lord Chief Baron had conveyed any censure on the conduct of the Crown. . The suggestion was that the challenging of jurors had been going on to such an extent that the Lord Chief Baron came to the conclusion that it was useless to bring up the jurors to be sworn. What were the facts? Four jurors were ordered to stand aside, and it was the first case in which any jurors were challenged. It was difficult to understand, therefore, how the Lord Chief Baron could have come to the opinion he was alleged to have expressed.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: But did he use the words? They speak for themselves.

Mr. ATKINSON: I believe the Lord Chief Baron made an observation, but I understand that the report is inaccurate.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: If the right hon. and learned Gentleman has referred the matter to the Lord Chief Baron—

Mr. ATKINSON: I have not communicated with the Lord Chief Baron.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Then if you want an explanation you ought to ask him for it.

Mr. ATKINSON said he had no right to examine the Lord Chief Baron, but he had ascertained from the Crown solicitor that it was the first case in which any jurors were challenged, so that the report in the paper was necessarily inaccurate.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL pointed out that the Tory organ in Cork criticised the action of the Lord Chief Baron in using the words.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND asked whether it was not evident that the Lord Chief Baron was speaking not only of his experience on that particular occasion, but of his long experience, extending over many years, of the practice.

Mr. ATKINSON did not know how that might be, but the facts were as he had stated. With regard to the Questions concerning the Land Act, he could not state precisely whether the Estates Commissioners had formulated any schemes for labourers' cottages, but he believed they had had their attention directed to the matter. In the new Labourers Bill would be found drastic provisions enabling schemes formulated by the Estates

Commissioners to be carried out at once with great thoroughness. In the case of a tenant who had purchased his holding, it would be quite impossible for the Estates Commissioners, under the Act, to purchase that holding in order to sell it to somebody else. There was nothing to prevent a tenant selling the holding to another purchaser, but the Estates Commissioners would have no power to require him so to sell. The hon. Member was entirely in error with regard to the appointment of secretaries to the Commissioners. The formation of the staff was a matter of negotiation, and during the negotiations it was not desirable to appoint a staff more than adequate to deal with the work at the particular moment, but it was necessary that the arrangements should be sufficiently elastic to allow of extension when the work increased.

Mr. KILBRIDE said his complaint was that the expressed desire of the Commissioners to have certain gentlemen appointed as their secretaries was overruled by Sir John Franks.

Mr. ATKINSON understood that that was a mistake. As to the *status* of the clerks, some were Civil servants; some had been transferred from another department, some were temporary, and some were permanent. With regard to the particular estates mentioned by the hon. Member, it was highly undesirable to discuss in Parliament questions at present pending before the Estates Commissioners, who would have to decide as best they could on the matters before them. If a question of law arose there was suitable machinery for referring the matter to the legal head of the Commissioners for decision. That course had been taken in several cases, and decisions had been given enabling the Commissioners to proceed with their administrative work. Another question was with regard to the sale of town holdings. The Act was intended for the sale of agricultural land. There might be isolated cases to the contrary, but it was never intended that town holdings should be purchased under the Act, or that the money provided should be absorbed by the purchase of town holdings from town tenants.

*Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) called attention to the inaction of the Congested Districts Board for Scotland. For years past they had been hoarding their money, and although recently they had been spending it more freely they were not dealing with the most congested districts. In the Island of Lewis not a yard of land had been secured under the Act. The Board was primarily established for the purpose of securing land for the people, for the extension of holdings, and for the migration of the people, but not one of those purposes had been served in this Congested Island. Several years ago twenty-nine quarter-acre sites for fishermen's dwellings were secured, but the conditions were such that only men who had broken the law were able to obtain them. He did not believe in breaking the law; he preached the gospel of peace, but he was afraid it was a mistake, and that his constituents followed his advice to their hurt. If they broke the law they would probably receive more attention. The conditions for these dwellings, although they had been modified, were still so onerous that there had been only twenty applicants, and not one site had been allotted. Houses of the most insanitary character existed, cattle being separated from human beings by a mere hand rail. Moreover, the apathy and indifference of a Government Department had allowed the fishing industry to be ruined. A Report of the most distressing character had been presented with regard to the Island of Lewis. Why did not the Government take action on that Report? A Government Bill had been introduced to amend the Congested Districts Board Act, but simply because the hon. Member for Mid Lanark placed a "block" on the Paper, the Government shivered in their shoes, and notwithstanding their magnificent majority, withdraw the Bill. That was a miserable conclusion for the Government to come to. Had the Scottish Office approached, Major Matheson, the proprietor of the Island of Lewis, and asked him to break up some of the large farms? If not, why not? And why were not the deer forests broken up? The hon. Member was continuing to deal with the condition of the Island of Lewis when

*MR. SPEAKER said the hon. Member was repeating, in precisely the same language, statements he had already made in his speech.

*MR. WEIR said he had no desire to indulge in repetition. He urged that some system of technical education should be instituted in the Island, so that the young people might be able to go out into the world and hold their own. Another thing that could be done was to approach the railway and steamship companies with a view to getting lower rates for the conveyance of fish, as the present rates were absolutely prohibitive. A matter which ought to be dealt with by the Local Government Board was the number of uncertified deaths in Scotland, specially in the Highlands. Happily the Highlan people were not likely to administer poison to their fellows, but the system offered great opportunities for it. In conclusion he pressed for a better service in connection with the provision of cruisers for the protection of the fisheries.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. SCOTT DICKSON, Glasgow, Bridgton) thought the hon. Member had been hardly fair in charging the Congested Districts Board with hoarding up funds, when he knew that quite recently large purchases had been made, and that the development of the estates which had been purchased would be productive of considerable benefit.

*MR. WEIR said his contention was that the Board did not pay the slightest attention to the most congested part.

MR. SCOTT DICKSON said they were obliged to take estates where they could get them. Most of the matters to which the hon. Member had referred had been brought up on many previous occasions, and no advantage would accrue from repeating the replies then given. He would, therefore, content himself by saying that he would bring the question raised by the hon. Member before the notice of his hon. friend the Secretary for Scotland.

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield) said that during the South African war commissions were given to a number of men from the ranks, and he understood that most of those men had been "hustled" out of the Army in a manner which was not creditable to the service or to the country. He hoped the War Office would see that the few remaining officers of the class he referred to were not "hustled" out in the same way.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 139; Noes, 39. (Division List No. 72.)

AYES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arnold-Forster, Rt. Hn. Hugh O.
Asher, Alexander
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Manch'r
Balfour, Rt Hn. Gerald W. (Leeds
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir Michael Hicks
Bignold, Arthur
Bigwood, James
Bond, Edward
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Caldwell, James
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbyshire
Chamberlain, Rt Hn. J. A. (Worc.
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Coates, Edward Feetham
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow(
Cox, Irwin Edward Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.
Crossley, Rt. Hon. Sir Savile
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Davenport, William Bromley
Dickson, Charles Scott
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph
Dorington, Rt. Hon. Sir John E.
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir William Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
FitzGerald, Sir Robert Penrose
Forster, Henry William
Foster, Philip S. (Warwick, S.W.
Fyler, John Arthur
Gardner, Ernest
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (Elgin & Nairn
Gore, Hon. S. F. Ormsby-(Linc.
Goschen, Hon. George Joachim
Graham, Henry Robert
Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
Greene, Henry D. (Shrewsbury)
Grenfell, William Henry
Guthrie, Walter Murray
Hambro, Charles Eric
Hamilton, Marq. of (L'nd'nderry
Harris, F. Leverton (Tynem'th)
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heath, Arthur Howard (Hanley
Heath, James (Staffords. N.W.
Helder, Augustus
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hope, J. F. (Sheffield, Brightside
Horniman, Frederick John
Hozier, Hon. James Henry Cecil
Hunt, Rowland
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Kenyon, Hon. Geo. T. (Denbigh)
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (Salop.
Keswick, William
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Glasgow)
Lawrence, Wm. F. (Liverpool)
Lawson, John Grant (Yorks. N.R
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants., Fareham
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Frederick, N.S
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter, (Bristol, S.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
M'Arthur, Charles (Liverpool)
Manners, Lord Cecil
Markham, Arthur Basil
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Maxwell, W. J. H. (Dumfriesshire
Milner, Rt. Hon. Sir Frederick G.
Milvain, Thomas
Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
Moore, William
Morgan, David J. Walthamstow
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Nicholson, William Graham
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Pym, C. Guy
Randles, John S.
Rasch, Sir Frederic Carne
Reid, James (Greenock)
Renwick, George
Ridley, Hon. M. W. (Stalybridge
Ridley, S. Forde (Bethnal Green
Ritchie, Rt. Hon. Chas. Thomson
Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
Saunderson, Rt. Hn. Col. Edw. J.
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Seely, Charles Hilton (Lincoln)
Shackleton, David James
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. Edw. M.
Tuff, Charles
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Walrond, Rt. Hn. Sir William H.
Warde, Colonel C. E.
Webb, Colonel William George
Weir, James Galloway
Welby, Sir Charles G. E. (Notts.)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whiteley, H. (Ashton und. Lyne)
Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)
Wilson, John (Glasgow)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath)
Wood, James
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Allen, Charles P.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Boland, John
Burke, E. Haviland
Campbell, John (Armagh S.)
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cullinan, J.
Delany, William
Devlin, Joseph (Kilkenny, N.)
Doogan, P. C.
Flynn, James Christopher
Hayden, John Patrick
Jordan, Jeremiah
Kilbride, Denis
Law, Hugh Alex. (Donegal, W.)
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cornwall)
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
M'Hugh, Patrick A.
M'Killop, W. (Sligo, North)
Murphy, John
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nolan, Joseph (Louth, South)
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Malley, William
O'Mara, James
Power, Patrick Joseph
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Roche, John
Sheehan, Daniel Dani[illegible]
Sheehy, David
Sullivan, Donal
Toulmin, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Captain Donelan and Mr. Patrick O'Brien.

Bill accordingly read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

Adjourned at twenty minutes after One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 25th March, 1904.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Southport and Lytham Tramroad (Extension of Time) Bill [H.L.]. Reported, with Amendments.

Barrow-in-Furness Corporation Bill [H.L.]. Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Chesterfield Corporation (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [H.L.]. Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Corbridge Gas Bill; Great Eastern Railway (Steamboats) Bill; South-Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway (Extension of Time) Bill. Read 2ª, and committed.

Matlock and District Gas Bill [H.L.]; Tynemouth Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Metropolitan Railway Bill [H.L.]; Cambrian Railways Bill [H.L.]; York Town and Blackwater Gas Bill [H.L.]; West Metropolitan Railway (Abandonment) Bill [H.L.]; Nuneaton and Chilvers Coton Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]; Ticehurst and District Water and Gas Bill [H.L.]; Tyneside Tramways and Tramroads Bill [H.L.]. Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Southend Water Bill. Read 3ª, with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons.

Chippenham Gas Bill; Great Eastern Railway Bill; Kirkby-in-Ashfield Urban District Gas Bill; Sheppy Gas Bill; Torquay Tramways Bill; Wellington (Somerset) Gas Bill; Bexhill Water and Gas Bill; North Staffordshire Railway Bill. Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; and referred to the Examiners.

PRIVATE AND PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILLS.

Ordered, That Standing Orders Nos. 92 and 93 be suspended; and that the time for depositing petitions praying to be heard against Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills, also the time for depositing Documents relating to any Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, which would otherwise expire during the adjournment of the House at Easter, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the Recess.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

ARMY.

General Annual Return of the British Army, January to September, 1903.

WAR OFFICE.

Report of the War Office (Reconstitution) Committee, Part III.

BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Sixty-fifth Annual Report of the Registrar-General.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

LAND TRANSFER ACTS.

Land Transfer Rules, dated 18th December, 1903, made in pursuance of Section 111 of the Land Transfer Act, 1875, and Section 22 of the Land Transfer Act, 1897. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Standing Order No. 39 to be considered on Monday next in order to its being suspended for that day's sitting.

Site for Duke of York's School Bill [H.L.]. Amendments reported (according to order). Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next; and to be printed as amended. (No. 42.)

Naval Prize Bill [H.L.]. Read 3ª (according to order); Amendments made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

Metropolitan Improvements (Funds) Bill. Read 2ª (according to order); Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next.

THE FISCAL BLUE-BOOK.

The Earl of WEMYSS: My Lords, I wish to give notice that after the Easter recess I shall put the following question to His Majesty's Government, viz.: "To ask the Government if they will reconsider their refusal and give the information that has been asked for in both Houses of Parliament concerning matters cut out of the Fiscal Inquiry Blue-book before it was published."

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Five o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 25th March, 1904.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. **Speaker** laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz. :—New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company Bill [Lords]. Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

Bexhill Water and Gas Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

North Staffordshire Railway Bill (King's Consent signified). Read the third time, and passed.

Croyden Gas Bill; Great Northern Railway Bill; London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway Bill; Ryde Gas Bill; Southend-on-Sea Gas Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1). Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Ashton-in-Makerfield, Brighton, Manchester, Nelson, Scarborough, and Sunderland. Ordered to be brought in by Mr. Grant Lawson and Mr. Walter Long.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill. "To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Ashton-in-Makerfield, Brighton, Manchester, Nelson, Scarborough, and Sunderland," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 140.]

Colney Hatch Gas Bill; London and North Western Railway Bill; Midland Railway Bill. Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Acton Improvement Bill. Reported, with Amendments, from the Police and Sanitary Committee [Costs awarded]; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to—Southend Water Bill, with Amendments.

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for incorporating and conferring powers upon the Matlock and District Gas Company; and for other purposes." [Matlock and District Gas Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to increase the number of the wards and of the Council of the Borough of Tynemouth; and for other purposes." [Tynemouth Corporation Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Metropolitan Railway Company to convert and consolidate their existing capital; to raise additional capital; and for other purposes." [Metropolitan Railway Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An act for amalgamating the Mid Wales Railway Company with the Cambrian Railways Company; for conferring further powers upon the last named company; and for other purposes." [Cambrian Railways Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for incorporating and conferring powers on the York Town and Blackwater Gas Company; and for other purposes." [York Town and Blackwater Gas Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for the abandonment of the West Metropolitan Railway; and for other purposes." [West Metropolitan Railway (Abandonment) Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Urban District Council of Nuneaton and Chilvers Coton to construct works for prevention of floods on the River Anker within the urban district of Nuneaton and Chilvers Coton and the rural district of Nuneaton, in the county of Warwick; and for other purposes." [Nuneaton and Chilvers Coton Urban District Council Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for amalgamating the undertakings of the Ticehurst and Robertsbridge Water Company and the Wadhurst, Ticehurst, and District Gas Light and Coke Company, for extending their limits of supply, for authorising the construction of works, and the raising of additional capital; and for other purposes." [Ticehurst and District Water and Gas Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confer further powers upon the Tyneside Tramways and Tramroads Company with respect to the construction and maintenance of works and the acquisition of lands; and for other purposes." [Tyneside Tramways and Tramroads Bill [Lords.]

Matlock and District Gas Bill [Lords]; Tynemouth Corporation Bill [Lords]; Metropolitan Railway Bill [Lords]; Cambrian Railways Bill [Lords]; York Town and Blackwater Gas Bill [Lords]; West Metropolitan Railway (Abandonment) Bill [Lords]; Nuneaton and Chilvers Coton Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; Ticehurst and District Water and Gas Bill [Lords]; Tyneside Tramways and Tramroads Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

LICENCES (RENEWAL).

Petitions against alteration of Law; from Broadwey and Upwey; Newlyn; Lancaster; Hackney; Birkenhead; Conway; Tunbridge Wells; Hunslet; Morecambe; Walthamstow; Ilford; Barnsley (two); Blackpool; Roxwell; Highgate; Ardingly; Ashford; Cricklewood; Edgware; and Crediton; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF BUTTER BILL.

Petitions against; from Hednesford; and Nottingham; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

ARMY.

Copy presented, of General Annual Return of the British Army for January to September, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (ARMY VOTES).

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 21st March, 1904, under the Appropriation Act, 1903, authorising the temporary application of Surpluses on certain Army Votes for the year 1903–4 to defray excesses on other Army Votes for the same year [pursuant to Resolution of the House of 4th March, 1879]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 112.]

BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES (ENGLAND).

Copy presented, of Sixty-fifth Annual Report of the Registrar-General, 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to consolidate, with Amendments, the Enactments relating to Naval Prize of War." [Naval Prize Bill [Lords.]

NEW WRIT.

New Writ for the County of the Isle of Wight, in the room of Major John Edward Bernard Seely (Chiltern Hundreds).—(*Sir A. Acland-Hood.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Certified and Uncertified Deaths in England and Wales.

Sir WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he can state the number of deaths registered in England and Wales for the last five years for which he has official Returns, and the number certified and uncertified for each of the years.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) I have obtained the following figures from the Registrar-General on this subject:—

Year.	Number of Deaths.			
	Total.	Certified by Registered Medical Practitioners.	Inquest Cases.	Uncertified Deaths.
1898 . .	552,141	507,541	34,159	10,441
1899 . . .	581,799	534,446	36,608	10,745
1900 . . .	587,830	539,712	36,861	11,257
1901 . . .	551,585	504,818	36,781	9,986
1902 . . .	535,538	490,091	35,793	9,654

The proportions per 100 deaths are as follows:—

Year.	Certified by Registered Medical Practitioners.	Inquest Cases.	Uncertified Deaths.		
			Total.	Reported to Coroners.	Not reported to Coroners.
1898 . . .	91·92	6·19	1·89	1·44	0·45
1899 . . .	91·86	6·29	1·85	1·45	0·40
1900 . . .	91·81	6·27	1·92	1·57	0·35
1901 . . .	91·52	6·67	1·81	1·50	0·31
1902 . . .	91·52	6·68	1·80	1·54	0·26

Postal Facilities in County Donegal.

Mr. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that in the postal district of Falcarragh, county Donegal, there is an interval of barely two hours between the arrival and departure of the mails, and that in the Gweedore and Bunbeg postal districts the mails do not arrive until 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. respectively, whilst there is no subsequent departure of letters until the following day; and whether, in the event of its being decided to forward the mails in future by rail instead of by road, he will take care that in all the districts affected there shall be at least one early delivery of letters and a reasonable time allowed for correspondence before the departure of the outgoing mail on the same day.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) The question of forwarding the mails for Falcarragh, Gweedore, and Bunbeg by railway instead of by road has for some time been under consideration. I will communicate the result to the hon. Member as soon as I am in a position to do so.

Cost of Educating Children from Other Districts sent to Corstorphine (Midlothian)

THE MASTER OF ELIBANK (Edinburgh, Midlothian): To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he is aware that the ratepayers of Corstorphine, Midlothian, are charged with the education of sixty-five boys and girls who, under a sheriffs' or magistrates' committal order, have been sent from various parts of Scotland to an institution in that locality, managed and directed by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children; and, if so, whether he will consider the advisability of introducing legislation to relieve a country educational authority from bearing the burden of educating children unconnected with its district.

(*Answered by Mr. A. Graham Murray.*) The circumstances referred to in the Question have been brought before the Department. The point involved is one of great difficulty, and I do not think it expedient to pronounce an opinion as to the best method of dealing with it in anticipation of the Bill of which I have given notice.

Antrim Lunatic Asylum Clothing Contracts—Alleged Monopoly.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the material used for the male patients' clothing in connection with the County Antrim Lunatic Asylum, the woollen material of Irish manufacture for female patients, together with the material from which the male attendants uniforms are made, are manufactured by one mill in Lisbellaw, county Fermanagh; that this mill have the manufacturing of fifteen out of the sixteen items of Irish manufacture supplied to Antrim Asylum, and that traders when tendering for Irish manufactured goods in Antrim Asylum are compelled to tender for the goods manufactured by this one mill in county Fermanagh; and if he is further aware that this mill have power to refuse and do refuse quotations to traders when requested to do so; and what steps, if any, does he intend taking in order that such contracts will be left open to all *bonâ fide* manufacturers and traders.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) I am making inquiry into this matter.

Betting Offices in Ireland.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the houses and offices used for illegal betting purposes in Belfast, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Londonderry, Armagh, Dundalk, Dublin, Limerick, Maryborough, Cork, and Tralee, in regard to which he received sworn information last year, are still carried on; and, if so, will he take immediate steps to have the law put in force in these places.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The police have exercised, and will continue to exercise, every possible vigilance in the enforcement of the law against betting. Since I replied to my hon. friend's Question of the 24th February, 1903,† on this subject, searches have been carried out by the police in a number of places where it was believed these houses were being conducted, and several successful prosecutions have been undertaken in Belfast and Cork.

Lisburn Rural District Council—Site for a Labourer's Cottage.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware of the delay that has taken place in fixing the price to be paid by the Lisburn Rural District Council for the site of a labourer's cottage sanctioned by the Privy Council; and if he will instruct the Local Government Board to fix the price by arbitration according to law.

(*Answered by Mr Wyndham.*) I am informed that as the result of negotiations between the council and the parties interested the matter has now been settled by agreement.

Delay in Erection of School Teacher's House at Leamlara, County Cork.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork County, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can explain the cause of the delay that has occurred in connection with the building of a house for the national school teacher at Leamlara, county Cork, in view of the fact that the necessary documents, including lease, were forwarded to the

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†See (4) *Debates* cxviii., 675.

Board of Works early last October; whether he is aware that the delay is causing the teacher discomfort and inconvenience; and will he say when the necessary permission to proceed with the work may be expected.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) Any delay that may have occurred is due to a modification of the original plans proposed by the applicant himself. The case is now engaging the consideration of the Board of Works, and if the further inquiries that are being made should be satisfactory the case will be recommended to the Treasury.

Education of Children of Indian Labourers imported into British Colonies.

SIR MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE (Bethnal Green, N.E.): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies what provision is made for the primary education of the children of labourers imported from India (under indenture or otherwise), into Natal, British Guiana, Mauritius, Fiji, and Trinidad, as well as the Straits Settlements and Ceylon; and whether there are any restrictions in the colonies referred to respecting the age at which these children may be employed, and their hours of labour.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) (1.) In British Guiana and Trinidad the elementary schools are open to the children of labourers imported from India equally with those of the rest of the population. Education in these schools is free in the lower standards in the case of British Guiana and throughout in the case of Trinidad. In Trinidad there are about fifty elementary schools receiving Government assistance, the main object of which is the instruction of Indian children, and there is a certified Indian training school under Government inspection for orphan, deserted, and other Indian children. No child under fifteen in British Guiana or under sixteen in Trinidad can be indentured or bound to perform any service on a plantation with the exception of children introduced into the colony with parents or friends who may be deemed between the ages of ten and fifteen in the case of British Guiana and sixteen in the case of Trinidad to be indentured to the employer to whom the parent or friend, under whose charge they were introduced is indentured. In British Guiana such children can be indentured only if the employer has made all available provision for their instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic. In neither colony does there appear to be any provision other than those applicable to all indentured labour limiting the hours of employment of children. (2.) In Natal there are schools for the children of Indian immigrants which are administered under the ordinary Education Acts of the colony. Under the Natal Indian Immigration Law of 1891 the assignment of younger persons to applicants for the services of Indian immigrants is only allowed for such lighter varieties of labour as they are fitted for. The minimum age for contract labour is ten years. (3.) In Mauritius the children of Indian immigrants are educated in the ordinary schools of the colony. Under the Labour Ordinance of 1878 no written contract of service shall be allowed with any minor under the age of ten, nor with any minor between the ages of ten and fifteen for more than one year, or without the consent of parent or guardian. A minor of fifteen or upwards is free to engage if a parent or guardian makes no objection. (4.) In Fiji, as in the other colonies, ordinary schools are open to the children of Indian immigrants. Such children, if they have come over with their parents and are over five years old at the date of arrival, are indentured to serve at the age of ten on the plantations to which their parents are indentured. (5.) The minimum age at which contracts may be entered into under the Indian Immigration Ordinance, 1899, in the Straits Settlements is sixteen. In this colony also the ordinany schools are available for the children of immigrants. (6.) The hon. Member is aware that in Ceylon the whole subject of the education of the children of labourers imported from India has been for some time past under the consideration of a Committee. The Report of this Committee is understood to be in the printer's hands in Ceylon, and will shortly be sent home.

British Indians and Chinese Labour Ordinance.

SIR MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will state fully the terms of the message in which Lord Milner, or the Transvaal authority, has asked permission to place some locations or residences of British Indian subjects in Johannesburg under the provisions of the Chinese Labour Ordinance owing to the prevalence of plague there, and what reply he has sent to the message; and whether, in view of the general powers of the local administration to provide sanitary safeguards in such an emergency, he will recommend that recourse be not had to the Ordinance, which distinctly provided that it was not applicable to British Indian subjects.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) The message to which I referred in my remarks in the House yesterday, and which, as I stated, seemed obscure, did not, I find, bear the meaning which I attached to it at first, and indeed related to another Ordinance altogether, which does not concern the treatment of Asiatics within the Transvaal. I have no reason to suppose that recourse will be had to the Labour Importation Ordinance in connection with the plague.

Revenue and Expenditure of Transvaal and Orange River Colonies.

Mr. LAMBERT (Devonshire, South Molton): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies what is the revenue and expenditure according to latest estimates of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony respectively, showing the revenue from railways separately.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) The Transvaal revenue on 1st February was estimated by Lord Milner at £4,300,000, and the expenditure at £3,600,000. The Orange River Colony revenue is estimated at about £750,000. The estimate of expenditure for the Orange River Colony is £558,686. The net revenue of the railways is now estimated at £1,400,000. To this figure should be added £200,000, carried forward from the last financial year.

Expenditure from the Transvaal Loan.

Mr. LAMBERT: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies what amount of the £30,000,000 Transvaal Loan has been expended, the main heads of the expenditure, the sum devoted to land settlement, the number of settlers, and their nationality, whether Dutch or British, in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) The figures which I have received from Lord Milner as to expenditure from the Transvaal Loan are as follows:—Expenditure to 31st December. I., A, £1,500,000; B, £2,430,000; C, £1,500,000; II., £11,270,000 (excluding interest); III., £5,810,000; IV., A, £1,770,000; B, £1,740,000; C, £570,000; Total £26,590,000. In the Transvaal the number of British settlers up to 30th June last was 313. In the Orange River Colony between 500 and 600. I am awaiting a Return with the latest figures as to British and Dutch settlers.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (WALES) BILL.

[Second Reading.]

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. BRYNMOR JONES (Swansea District) said in moving the Second Reading of the Bill that it simply involved the question whether it was or was not expedient to extend the operation of the procedure provided by the Scotch Act to the municipalities of Wales. The Bill for Scotland which was passed in 1899 was the direct result of the Report of a Select Committee of the House in 1898. The present Secretary for Scotland in introducing the Bill said—

> "Now the Goverment feel quite certain that any legislation which is held out on this subject for the acceptance of the House must be capable of extension to other parts of the United Kingdom. I believe that in saying that I have the assent of hon. Members who represent here Irish and Welsh constituences, although I do not think this is a question of nationality but of convenience."

This Bill was introduced in response to that appeal. The substantial reasons upon which the Report of the Select Committee were founded was the need of greater despatch and greater economy and more efficient inquiry in regard to matters which had been habitually treated by Parliament as matters for private Bill legislation. Under the Scotch Provisional Order system, they had first to make application to the Scottish Office for a Provisional Order; secondly, in case there was opposition or in case the Scottish Office thought there was need for it, a local inquiry took place, and thirdly, there was the confirmation of the Provisional Order by a Provisional Order Confirmation Bill introduced under the auspices of the Scottish Office. The corporation or other persons seeking Parliamentary powers had to apply for a Provisional Order in the terms of a Draft Provisional Order laid before the Secretary for Scotland. That had to be laid before the Clerk of Parliaments in the House of Lords, and the Private Bill Office in the House of Commons, and thereupon the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords and the Chairman of Ways and Means Committee in the House of Commons had to consider the Draft Provisional Order and report to the Secretary for Scotland whether or not, having regard to the subject matter of the Provisional Order, the promoters of the Order should be allowed to proceed under the Act of 1899, or by private Bill, according to the ordinary practice of Parliament in such case. If the Report were to the effect that it was not a matter which ought to be carried out by Provisional Order, but by a private Bill, the Secretary for Scotland practically ceased to have any control in the matter, and the promoters had to proceed by private Bill. Otherwise, there was an inquiry, in case of opposition, which was held in Scotland, conducted by a Parliamentary panel consisting of Members of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, or by an extra-Parliamentary panel appointed by the Secretary for Scotland from gentlemen who understood the business. A Report was then made by this Commission to the Secretary for Scotland, and if it were in favour of the Provisional Order, the Order was put into a Provisional Order Confirmation Bill, promoted by the Secretary for Scotland. It was in respect to the selection of the Commission that the promoters of this Bill by Part III. proposed some exception to the practice adopted in the Scotch Act. It was a great tax on Members of the House to have to go away to other places to discharge the duties which they usually discharged in the upper rooms of that House, and they proposed the establishment of a joint counties board, selected by various county councils of Wales corresponding to the extra-Parliamentary panel under the Act of 1899. He did not regard Part III. as a necessary part of the proposed legislation and if the Bill was accorded a Second Reading and went to a Committee they would be glad to listen to representations from the President of the Local Government Board on this point. He maintained that this legislation had been successful in regard to Scotland, where he had served on Commissions, there being not the slightest difficulty with regard to counsel, experts, etc., and people came forward almost voluntarily with evidence. Clearly local inquiries were much more satisfactory than those conducted by Committees upstairs. Wales was an economic entity at any rate so far as private Bill legislation was concerned. Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire were two of the most progressive counties in the Kingdom and the private Bill legislation which had come from Wales and which might be anticipated in the next few years was much larger than could be anticipated from any equal area in any part of England, except perhaps Lancashire and Yorkshire. It was not to be expected that in a matter of that kind there would be any popular agitation, but speaking on behalf of municipal authorities and local authorities generally, he was perfectly certain that there was a genuine demand for greater despatch, for greater economy, and for better inquiry into the schemes with which the Bill dealt.

He might give an illustration or two of the grievances of which the local authorities complained. A Bill was brought in the previous year which was promoted by the District Council of the Llandrindod Wells, a well-known health resort. The Bill asked for certain powers in the interests mainly of the visitors and very considerable expense was incurred. Eventually it was thrown out on financial grounds. Of that he did not complain, but the burden on the ratepayers was heavy, and that would have been much less had the inquiry been held locally instead of in London. Pwllheli suffered very much in the same manner. The town clerk of Cardiff, which was the largest town in Wales, said the Bill would be a great boon and added that the greatest opponents, in his opinion, would be the members of the Parliamentary Bar who derived big fees from private Bill legislation and could not attend to their work at Westminster and be down in the country at the same time. He did not know whether he was actuated by what the late Herbert Spencer called "professional bias" but the Town Clerk was a little unfair in speaking of counsel only. There were such persons as Parliamentary agents and expert witnesses. The town clerk went on to say that when public inquiries had been held in Wales, there had not been the slightest difficulty in obtaining professional and expert evidence of the highest character. There could be no doubt that the saving would be immense. At present Parliamentary Bills were put into groups, and it was impossible to say within two or three days when any particular one would come before the Parliamentary Committee, and the result was that witnesses had to be kept waiting. Wales had everything to gain by such a measure as this, because a Bill meant thousands of pounds and a Provisional Order often cost under £100. To this statement of the town clerk of Cardiff he was able by the courtesy of the hon. Member for East Glamorganshire to give the following details of expenses incurred by the Cardiff Corporation within the last few years, Cardiff Corporation Act, 1884, cost £9,627, the Cardiff Corporation Act, 1894, £10,680, and the amount paid by the Corporation from 1890 to March, 1903, was, for obtaining Parliamentary powers £20,205, and for opposing Parliamentary Bills £7,022, a total of £27,227. Those figures gave one pause. There seemed no reason in the nature of things why when local authorities were demanding powers in the general public interest of the ratepayers, there should be this enormous cost for private Bill legislation, whereas in regard to public matters the legislation cost nothing at all. He begged to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MAJOR WYNDHAM-QUIN (Glamorganshire, S.) said the hon. Member had made out, in his very interesting speech, a good case for the Bill, and he was glad to give him his hearty support. The principle involved in the Bill was a very sound one seeing that it sought to remove from the Committee room upstairs inquiries which could be held with very much more advantage in the localities affected. He spoke rather feelingly on that matter with regard to his own constituency. Reference had been made to the great expense involved in bringing Bills before this House, and he doubted whether any constituency had suffered more in that respect than his own. Very good results were likely to follow the appointment of a Commission under Part II. of the Bill, as it stood to reason that inquiries held on the spot would be more thorough and searching than if held in the House of Commons, and nobody would regret the removal of such inquiries to the country except, possibly, the learned gentlemen and others who would be engaged on the cases in London. The expense involved in the present system was really a scandal. Witnesses had to be brought from remote parts of the country and maintained in London: eminent counsel had to be engaged at huge fees; and Parliamentary agents had to be employed whose services were the reverse of gratuitous. There was no great magic in the existing practice, and if a better one could be devised it ought surely to be adopted. In the present measure three matters would require to be carefully safeguarded. First, that any tribunal should be efficient and command the confidence of those whose interests were involved; secondly, that it should be impartial, and above all suspicion of either partisanship or political bias; and thirdly, that Parliament should certainly possess the final control over the findings of the Commission. With the exception of Part III., he thought the measure ought to be supported in all quarters of the House. Personally, he objected to the constitution of the county councils board, not because he feared that the county councils, being largely composed of gentlemen politically opposed to himself, would not discharge their duties with absolute impartiality, but because it was more than likely that occasions would arise when they would be interested parties in the inquiries that had to be held. The county councils had quite sufficient work to do already, and no good purpose would be served by imposing fresh duties upon them. It had been stated that Part III. was not an essential portion of the Bill, and he believed that that view was shared by many hon. Members opposite. If that was the case, and the promoters were willing that Part III. should be withdrawn, he could see no reason why the Bill should not go forward, and eventually confer a real benefit upon the people of Wales. He suggested that the whole question should be referred to a Select Committee. If that were done he believed there would be found in the present proposals the elements of a good and useful measure applicable, not to Wales only, but also to England.

MR. HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somersetshire, E.), who was indistinctly heard, was understood to say that, although this Bill came before the House as a private measure, it involved a question of considerable national importance, affecting the devolution of private Bill business in every part of the country. The clauses in Part III. seemed to embody the embryo of Welsh Home Rule, and had probably been introduced more out of compliment to the national sentiment of the principality than with any desire to press the principle involved as a practical question on the attention of the House. Part III. might be either treated as mere ballast to be thrown over to secure the further passage of the Bill, or insisted upon as an integral portion of the measure. If the latter course were to be adopted, he thought the House ought to pause before consenting to the Bill. He would be the last person to say anything against the administrative abilities of the county councils, but he had always drawn a considerable distinction between employing them as administrative bodies and as legislative bodies, even in the humble department of private business. In regard to Parliamentary Committees, it had hitherto been insisted upon that Members taking part in the inquiries should have no local or personal interest in the matter under consideration. That was a most valuable principle. Part III. however, contained no such provision, and he rather doubted whether, with all their virtues, the county councils in Wales would always be careful to select persons who had no local or personal interest in the matters of inquiry. At any rate, some such provision ought to be inserted. Moreover, he did not think that public feeling in the country generally was ripe for giving any legislative power to county councils or to bodies of county councils. [AN HON. MEMBER: This is not legislative.] Inquiry was the first stage of legislation, and it might lead to conflicts between the House of Commons and the Welsh county councils. Recent proceedings on the part of certain Welsh county councils in respect of education were not likely to induce the House to assent very readily to giving them legislative or *quasi*-legislative powers. He believed the remainder of the Bill was well worthy of consideration, especially from the point of view, not of nationality, but of convenience. Local inquiries in many cases were most desirable in the public interest. Every Member of experience could recall cases in which it would have been a great advantage to have had the inquiry in the locality directly concerned. At present Committees had to rely upon photographs taken at any angle, and with any focus, and upon the contradictory statements of witnesses, whereas a view of the particular locality would at once settle the matter. It had always been a matter of much regret to him that, under the somewhat narrow reference to the Select Committee a few years ago, they were unable properly to consider or to make any recommendations with regard to the extension of the Provisional Order system. Many of the matters dealt with by private Bills could be quite as well investigated by a good inspector representing the Government Department. As a rule the proceedings under Scotch Bills were not strictly local inquiries, and they did not go to the town where the actual matter arose.

His hon. friend had covered a great deal of ground in his speech, but he had not given to the House any indication as to the extent to which private legislation was required in Wales.

He had been told on very good authority that the number of Welsh private Bills introduced annually did not amount to more than ten or twelve, and many of the questions in those Bills could be very well dealt with by a Provisional Order. There were other questions such as the Barry Docks which could not be dealt with by a Provisional Order because commercial interests were involved which affected not merely Wales but England as well. His point was that if they analysed the amount of Welsh business ordinarily before the House and excluded matters which were too important to be dealt with by a Parliamentary Commission, there was very little business remaining to be dealt with, and this Bill proposed to set up elaborate machinery which it was hardly worth while establishing for such a small amount of business. In great centres like Manchester, Newcastle, and Plymouth, there was much more business. The Irish case was much stronger. Ireland had more Bills and was put to more expense, and it had a separate Bar and separate local government and other laws. Those centres were more remote from London than Cardiff, and therefore the expense was much greater in bringing witnesses from Ireland than from Wales. All these matters pointed to the necessity for an inquiry into the working of the Scotch Act which had been in operation now some three or four years, in order to see to what extent it could be applied to the rest of the kingdom. Such an inquiry might result in useful proposals being made calculated to benefit the other parts of the United Kingdom. He did not think the Government were averse to inquiry, and in his opinion a Select Committee might evolve some constructive proposals which would have the effect of relieving future Parliaments, and at the same time benefiting the localities concerned. He begged to move the Amendment which stood in his name upon the Paper.

Colonel KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport) said he had great pleasure in seconding his hon. friend's Amendment. He represented a large English county immediately bordering on Wales, and the history of that county had been a somewhat significant one. It used to be the duty of the county of Shropshire to carry out prompt punishment on the Welshman who ventured across the border. Things had most happily changed, and now the whole tendency of England was to throw open her borders to the Welsh and invite them to cross and share in the advantages which some of them could get by leaving their own country and transferring their services to the other. There were some points in support of the Amendment which he wished to urge both from the local and the general point of view. He understood from the able introduction of the Bill by the hon. Gentleman opposite, that there was a general disposition felt by Members from Wales to throw over Part III. He would say at once that if Part III. was not to be thrown over, the opponents of the measure would have a different kind of opposition to offer from what they would give to it in its modified form. But they could not get away from the fact that Part III. was in the Bill. It would have been wiser if the promoters had never put it forward, because it might be taken as an indication of what the Welsh Members desired, and as a warning as to the direction in which they would move if they could. Part III. was Home Rule, and to that he and his friends absolutely objected, and they were obliged to meet it with strong opposition. Apart from that, assuming that the suggested county board was free from the taint of Home Rule he could not conceive how it would be possible to form a county board which would be clear of local interest, if not personal interest, in the questions with which it would have to deal. Hon. Members knew that there were no matters on which local feeling ran so high as on such matters as bridges and railways, and it was desirable to have an impartial body to deal with them. The proposed board would not very long retain the confidence of those who had to come before it. He understood, of course, that the nature of the Bills submitted to it would be extremely limited. They would be only those purely appertaining to Wales, but hon. Members could understand how very difficult it would be, in many cases, to draw the line between Welsh interests and the interest of those counties which were on the borders of the Principality.

In regard to the advantages which might be supposed to be gained by Wales, or the country generally, by this proposition, he should like to say a few words. It was generally acknowledged that there was considerable congestion of private business, and that it would be well to have some system of devolution for the better treatment of the congested matters. Would the devolution proposed under this Bill for dealing with that congestion be really advantageous and conducive to the good conduct of the business? As to the amount of business to be dealt with, his hon. friend had put forward some figures which would be touched by this Bill if it came into play. He himself had taken some trouble to ascertain the average number of Bills which could be dealt with locally. He was informed that the average number of Bills from Wales during the last few years was about ten. [An HON. MEMBER: No.] That was the information he had received from what he believed to be a reliable source. Of these ten, five would be railway Bills. Very few railway Bills could possibly be dealt with under this proposition because they would almost invariably touch the interests of places outside of Wales. If that information was correct, there would remain about five purely local Bills that might be dealt with under this proposal, so that they would be setting up very large machinery to deal with a small amount of work, while they would not practically touch the question of congestion by this particular form of devolution. Would there be gain or loss by such devolution as this? The balance lay in the convenience and the general advantages supposing this Bill were to pass in its present form. He was told that the general convenience of counsel would be better consulted by these measures being still dealt with in London. He was a distinct advocate of local talent, and he thought it would be a good thing if the fees which poured in a great stream into comparatively few pockets in London could be better distributed. But he wondered whether it would be altogether popular with local solicitors and local witnesses. He had heard, sometimes, of considerable expressions of pleasure and satisfaction on their part at the prospect of a local Bill coming to London, and witnesses had not regarded the present system as a matter on which they should take offence. [An HON. MEMBER: What about the ratepayers?] These gentlemen seemed to have some means of getting round the ratepayers. He doubted whether, if they were to take the opinion of local solicitors and witnesses, there would be a strong body of evidence in support of this proposal. As to expert witnesses, it would, of course, be easier for them to give evidence here than to have to travel down to some corner of Wales in order to give it. The proposed procedure, therefore, would not result in any real economy in pounds, shillings, and pence from the point of view of the ratepayers.

Reference had been made to the success of the system of procedure in Scotland. He wished to state one or two points showing that the position in Scotland was cardinally different from that in Wales. He was given to understand that the great mass of the business under the Scotch Act was conducted at Edinburgh and Glasgow—two large centres convenient of access for those concerned in the matters dealt with. The greater part of the success of the Scotch measure had been due to the way in which those who represented this House there had discharged their duties. The hon. Member who introduced the Bill spoke very warmly of the fact that the counsel who appeared before him in Scotland were not less qualified and eminent than those who appeared before him at Westminster. There was a large Scotch Bar which was always available on the spot for conducting this business. Was there a Welsh Bar? [Cries of "Yes."] He knew that Wales was overflowing with legal talent, but he did not know that they could talk of a Welsh Bar as distinct from the English Bar. Scotland was a little more self-contained than Wales, and Scotch Bills were much more likely to deal with questions pertaining to that country than would be the case in Wales with respect to Welsh Bills. They might say that the Scotch Bill ought to be applied to Ireland. He thought there was a close connection between the position occupied by Scotland and the position that might be occupied by Ireland under a measure of this sort, but it did not follow that, because the position of these two countries was analogous, an experiment which had worked well in Scotland ought to be applied to Wales. He quite allowed that there was very good reason for urging that the system of devolution ought to be carried further than at present with general good results and convenience. But if these advantages were to be obtained, then it must be by the creation of convenient areas or districts in different parts of England and Wales where there was a local centre easy of access. That would be better than taking up the line of demarcation suggested by the Bill before the House. Lancashire and Yorkshire, for instance, might claim to be treated as an area for the purposes of private Bill procedure. Therefore, while it had not been shown that in consequence of the Scotch success the scheme should be applied to Wales, he thought a case had been made out for devolution to be applied to the whole Kingdom in respect of certain areas. He hoped he was the last person in the world to suggest that there should be less *esprit de corps* among hon. Members for Wales. As an old soldier he always recognised the value of *esprit de corps*; but he urged that a big change, such as was contemplated by this Bill, ought not to be made in the interest of one portion of the United Kingdom. He urged that the general convenience of the United Kingdom must override any attempt to apply it to any single portion of the kingdom.

The Amendment of his right hon. friend, which he was seconding, was based on the right of the whole kingdom to have equal treatment in this matter. Many hon. Members had had considerable experience of some of the difficulties attending the passing of private Bill legislation in this House. He had not very long ago to take a considerable part in the passing of a private Bill which had been discussed at great length by Committees upstairs for more than a year. He had only too vivid recollections of the inconveniences and cost of that procedure, and he had an ardent desire that the inquiries into such Bills should be conducted on the spot. But under this proposed measure he would have to meet the same difficulties, while his neighbours across the border in Wales would be deprived of them. He was quite sure that hon. Gentlemen from Wales would be willing to extend to the English people the privileges which they asked for themselves. Would not the substitution of areas, as was suggested by his right hon. friend, be as good for Wales as if Wales were treated as a separate entity—assuming convenience of access and ability to collect evidence at a given spot with the greatest ease. He found that the capital of his own county, Shrewsbury, was perpetually made use of as the meeting place of gentlemen interested in great Welsh questions. Many hon. Members from Wales were frequent visitors to that town, and his townsfolk were always glad that they should meet there to discuss questions relating to Wales. But, if Shrewsbury was at present the most convenient spot for them to meet, it would be equally convenient for the work of private Bill devolution. They would then get rid of the little rift in the lute and be able to adjust any little differences between themselves and their neighbours in Wales. He understood that the Amendment moved by his right hon. friend was almost more than favourably regarded by the Government and that there was no desire to accept it in an indirect way. He understood that if the Amendment were generally approved of, the Government would be willing to adopt it as their own, and give effect to it by the immediate appointment of a Committee and take steps to carry out whatever decision the Committee arrived at. If that were the case, might he join in the appeal of his right hon. friend to the Welsh Members to meet them in this case, and so bring about as soon as possible a more complete arrangement on this matter? The English Members would, in that event, owe them a debt of gratitude for having raised this question, which would undoubtedly lead to many material advantages.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'That' to the end of the Question, and add the words 'this House, while recognising that further devolution of its powers in connection with Private

Bill Legislation may be desirable, considers that such devolution should be preceded by a full inquiry into the manner in which The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, has worked, and the extent to which it is capable of application to the rest of the United Kingdom.' "—(*Mr. Henry Hobhouse.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said that he approached the consideration of this Bill as Chairman of the Committee which passed the Scotch Bill. Being, therefore, a friend to the more practical proposals of the Bill before the House, as distinguished from those of a more visionary character, he only regretted that there had been any kind of admixture with the principles of this Bill of anything of the nature of the merits of the artistic, literary, ethnological, or economic independence of Wales. Hon. Members from Wales must remember that the day might come when they might have to insist on the unity of Wales with Great Britain, in such a case as that when Mr. Gladstone said that "the distinction between England and Wales, except in the recital of an Act of Parliament for the purpose of indicating their unity, was totally unknown to our Constitution." That was on the occasion when he moved the Redistribution Bill in 1884, when a proposal was made to reduce the representation of Wales, a representation which might come in the future to be defended by Welsh Members on grounds very opposite from those they were taking now. To insist on any separate and distinct claim of Wales in regard to private Bill legislation was not necessary to the hon. Gentleman's argument, and therefore it was that he was happy to meet him to a great extent in regard to the merits of his proposals. In considering this question he started from three fundamental principles. One was the good old principle that justice, so far as possible, should be brought to a man's door. They must not forget that though in all these cases they were granting a private law they had at the same time to inform themselves of the local state of affairs and exercise a judicial function. That was the principle under which the Judges from the very earliest times were sent down to the localities to exercise justice near a man's door and at the same time to avoid splitting the national law into local customs. The second principle on which the House should proceed was that local inquiries should be so managed as to discourage appeals either to that House or elsewhere. In other words, the persons holding the inquiry should command such confidence that their decisions would not be appealed against. The third principle was that they must not lose sight of the sovereignty of Parliament and the fundamental principle that Parliament must be the supreme Legislative Tribunal. Therefore he was not in favour of fancy tribunals.

He did not agree with the right hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment that it would be just the same if an inspector of the Local Government Board were to go down to the country to make an inquiry. They had called before the Scotch Committee Sir Robert Mowbray, who had unrivalled experience as Chairman of the Committee of Selection, and they gave him an opportunity of stating his objections to the Scotch Bill. They found his objections proceeded upon a total misconception of what the ultimate effect would be of the proposals of the Bill. He said they would never get Members of Parliament to go to Stornoway in the middle of winter. That was not the intention or the effect of the Scotch Bill. In the first place, as regarded the season, a little business management would avoid having to undergo the rigours of winter in Stornoway or anywhere else, and an enormous mitigation of the hardships was secured, if the case was brought to such a centre as Oban, which might form a centre for many of the cases from the Highlands. He was not aware whether cases were heard at Inverness, but Inverness might form another centre. This was not really a Welsh question at all. It was a question really of saving expense to suitors upon the old principle on which the Judges were sent on circuit, and the same principles applied to cases from Carlisle, Newcastle, Plymouth, and other distant portions of England. The case of Ireland undoubtedly presented great difficulty; and should the House ever tackle the question of Irish private

Bill legislation, it would probably be prepared to go much further in the direction of establishing local institutions than it would in the case of either England or Wales. He had stated the fundamental conditions which should govern private Bill legislation. A Committee of four Members of the two Houses might be difficult, but a Committee of two would be convenient and would command local confidence. Hon. Gentlemen should not forget the attributes which attached to Members of the two legislative bodies of the country. If Members attending Private Bill Committees proceed to the duty under proper conditions, and surrounded with every circumstance of dignity and comfort when they were engaged in discharging such high and important functions, he would be surprised if there would be any difficulty in getting Members to act. They might have an extra-Parliamentary panel if necessary; but he hoped the inquiries in the main would be conducted by Members of both Houses, if only because the ultimate decision would be in Parliament. If only there was a certainty of getting Members to serve, there would be no necessity for a Statute at all. All that would be necessary would be an Amendment of the Standing Orders to the effect that Private Bill Committees of either House might sit elsewhere than at Westminster, and during periods when Parliment was not in session. He did not see why the Bill should not proceed to Second Reading, and why a proposal which had been so reasonably submitted should not have the affirmation of the House of Commons.

MR. J. H. LEWIS (Flint Boroughs) said he believed that nearly every Member who had carefully considered the question of private Bill legislation held the opinion expressed by the Prime Minister when he was Secretary for Scotland, that the present system of private Bill legislation by Committees of the House of Commons and House of Lords was utterly absurd, expensive, and antiquated. The Lord Advocate for Scotland, speaking in a debate on the Scotch Private Legislation Procedure Bill, had stated that—

> "Even in the case of unopposed measures the present system was both cumbersome and expensive, that it was far more favourable in its treatment of the large opponent than of the smaller. They were accustomed to see cases in which the smaller interests were simply bludgeoned by the great corporations, either railway or municipal corporations, and the way in which opposition was sometimes treated was a great scandal. The smaller interests were kept dangling week after week while the larger interests fought, and at the last moment, when the adjustment of clauses was reached, there was an undignified scramble, and the smaller interests were scarcely listened to."

It was not surprising that under these circumstances the question should have been repeatedly raised in Parliament, and it was generally agreed that the last Parliament acted wisely when it passed the Scotch Private Bill Procedure Act. This was by no means the first time that this question had been brought forward with specific reference to Wales. Amendments had been moved to the Speech from the Throne on more than one occasion complaining of the absence from the Government programme of the year of any proposal for legislation affecting the special interests of the Welsh people, and it was a remarkable fact that those debates had, on nearly every occasion, in the end narrowed themselves down into a demand for better facilities for private Bill legislation for Wales. A very strong case for such a reform had been made out, and the proposal had been well supported by Welsh Members sitting on both sides of the House.

There appeared to be some misconception on one point. It was supposed that the claim of Wales was not strong enough to justify Parliament in giving it separate treatment. In this matter Wales had quite as strong a case as Scotland, which had for years enjoyed the reform which Wales sought to obtain, and a much stronger case than that of Ireland, which had been repeatedly admitted by the Government. During a period of six years before the Scotch Act came into operation the number of private Bills applied for was as follows—Ireland 80, Scotland 130, Wales 140. Therefore Wales, as regards the number of private Bills, stood second out of the four nationalities of the United Kingdom. The case for reform had been admitted so far as Ireland was concerned. Now the number of private Bills from Wales during the last ten years was more than twice as numerous as the number of Bills from Ireland. The case of Wales for reform was therefore stronger than the case of Ireland, which the Government regarded as proved. If evidence from Wales had been taken before the Select Committee of 1888 it could have been shown that the case of the Principality for private Bill legislation was just as strong as the case of Scotland or Ireland. In Wales, owing to the rapid growth of seaside resorts on the North and West Coasts and the great development of industry and consequently of population in South Wales, the demand for parliamentary powers was increasing. But the objection most frequently taken to giving Wales some power to deal with this question was that every part of the country should have the same powers. To that principle he had not the least objection. It was all a question of ripeness of public opinion and of finding suitable areas. The right hon. gentleman the member for Croydon, when he was President of the Local Government Board, went much further than the modest proposal which the Welsh Members submitted to the House. He proposed to confer upon county councils, however small, large powers of making Provisional Orders. That proposal was defeated by the Municipal Corporations Association, but the proposal now made stood on a totally different plan, and the objections to the proposals of 1889 did not apply in this case. They asked that, in an area so large that no municipal corporation could feel any jealousy of it, a cautious and tentative movement, surrounded by safeguards as to consent which amounted to practical unanimity both in Wales and in Parliament, should be effected in the direction of cheapening procedure in private Bill legislation on the principles which had already been adopted and accepted by the House and which had worked satisfactorily in Scotland. The provisions of the Scotch Act had been closely followed throughout. The only new feature in this Bill was the proposed substitution of a joint board of the Welsh county councils for the purpose of making local inquiries. If this were adopted, it would do something to relieve Members from the strain of Parliamentary work. Their unnatural hours of work, from two to twelve, were bad enough. Most of them had already more than enough work to occupy their mornings, and the strain of attending at Private Bill Committees in addition to Parliamentary work was very heavy, and what made it worse was that the hearing before Private Bill Committees was concentrated into a part of the session, a number of Committees were held at the same time, and sometimes leading counsel were retained on practically every Committee, a result which was not satisfactory to promoters, opponents, or Committees. Once, many years ago, a leading Parliamentary counsel was seen walking in the Park, and, when a friend who met him showed some surprise that he was not at work, seeing that he was retained to appear before every Committee, he replied that he was doing equal justice to all his clients.

They heard constant references to the necessity for devolution, and no one denied that necessity, but the moment any practical action in that direction, however small, was proposed, the instinct of power at once asserted itself, with the result that the functions of Government were unduly centralised at Westminster, and that they had drifted into Government by bureaucracy. What danger could there be in the proposals contained in Clause 8, which provided that if the Welsh county councils unanimously resolved to appoint a joint board, the local inquiry should be undertaken by that Board. It could not be carried into effect if a single Welsh council was unwilling, nor could it become law if either the House of Commons or the House of Lords opposed it. Majorities in the House of Commons varied, but in the House of Lords the majority was as immutable as were the laws of the Medes and Persians in the ancient world. This Bill was surrounded by all the safeguards which the most timid statesman could possibly need.

One of the most important and most valuable features of this Bill was that it extended the Provisional Order system, which was far less expensive than the private Bill system. It was very seldom found necessary to appeal against a Provisional Order. From 1888 to 1897, 1,980 Provisional Orders were dealt with, and seventy-five — less than 4 per cent.—were appealed against. This meant a great saving of expense, the House fees for private Bills being very heavy. In the case of an ordinary unopposed Bill, the House fees of the Lords would be about £125, those of the Commons about £85, making a total of £210. In the case of a local authority seeking to promote a Gas Bill—one of the simplest private Bills that could be brought before Parliament—even if there was no opposition, the House fees in the Lords was about £100, and in the Commons about £80, making a total of £180. These, of course, did not include London agents' charges, which came to a very much larger amount, and to them must be added the fees and expenses of local solicitors, counsel, experts, and witnesses. He remembered the case of a simple Water Bill to which there was hardly any opposition, which cost £2,000, although the solicitors and engineers retained by the promoters cut down their costs to one half. If a Bill was opposed the House fees were very heavy. The fees of the House of Lords, if a Bill took ten days in Committee, were £142, and in the House of Commons £379, making a total of £521 for House fees alone. These were some of the fruits of a system which threw an entirely unnecessary burden upon the ratepayers of many a small town. But excessive House fees were, after all, only a very small part of the grievance. What private Bill legislation cost under the present system was illustrated by the case of one great dock scheme in South Wales. He had been told on good authority that the promoters spent £180,000 in obtaining Parliamentary powers. How much their opponents spent was not known, but he was assured that it was considerably more than the sum spent by the promoters. He had received some very interesting information from various parts of Wales with reference to the cost of private Bill procedure. For example, the town of Cardiff had since 1890 spent £20,205 in obtaining Parliamentary powers and £7,022 in opposing private Bills. Swansea had spent £16,812 in the same period, and most of the large urban communities of Wales had spent proportionately large sums. But they did not base their case for reform in this regard so much upon the expenditure of powerful commercial syndicates, or of great urban centres with a very heavy rateable value, which meant that the cost of obtaining Parliamentary powers imposed a comparatively light burden on the shoulders of the ratepayers. Their complaint was that the smaller towns were subjected to oppressive and unnecessary taxation. This was a special hardship in the case of watering places which were compelled to provide a good supply of water, electric light, drainage, and other necessities of civilised life for themselves and for the visitors upon whose custom they depended in the summer season.

The following were a few instances showing the heavy burden laid on many small towns on this account. He naturally selected examples in North Wales. Colwyn Bay had since 1890 spent the sum of £7,923, equivalent to a rate of 6½d. in the £ for the period during which the loan was repayable. Barmouth, for the promotion of one Bill for the purpose of obtaining a supply of water, had to pay £3,551 equivalent to a rate of 1s. 2d. in the £ for ten years, and this was not the only burden which that town had to bear in consequence of the high cost of private Bill legislation. Prestatyn, in Flintshire, was a small but rapidly growing seaside resort. It cost the town £2,250 to secure Parliamentary powers for obtaining a supply of water. equivalent to a rate of 1s. 3d. in the £ for five years. These instances would suffice to show how heavy was the burden which small and growing communities had to bear, and how public money which could have been utilised for important public purposes had been, owing to the existing state of the law, thrown away in purely unproductive work. Welsh coast towns were at the present time feeling acutely the burden of heavy rates. In many cases works of a permanent and reproductive character had within recent years been undertaken on a large scale, and this had resulted in very heavy indebtedness. The local authorities had deemed the works for which they had borrowed absolutely necessary for the health and comfort of the inhabitants and the visitors. But what the ratepayers grudged, and with good reason, was that the cost of obtaining necessary Parliamentary powers imposed upon the rates a burden of unproductive expenditure. One great source of avoidable expense was the cost of bringing hosts of witnesses up to London and keeping them there. Committees only sat five days a week and five hours a day; there was often considerable uncertainty about the time when the witnesses would be required, and they frequently had to wait for days before they were called, if they were called at all. If the inquiry were local, a considerable share of this expense could be saved, witnesses who from old age or infirmity were unable to come up to London could be heard, and, more important still, the Committee would be able to inspect the place to which the Bill related; they would thus be able to dispense with much of the evidence that would otherwise be required, and would have better materials for arriving at a sound judgment, The Scotch Private Bill Procedure Act had been passed five years ago. The testimony of all connected with its working was that it had been a great success, had caused injustice to no one, and had saved much needless trouble and expenditure. They asked that a similar Act, similar in principle although not in every detail, should be passed for Wales.

COLONEL PRYCE-JONES (Montgomery Boroughs) said it had not been his intention to make a speech on that occasion, but the hon. Member who last addressed the House had so often referred to the harmless nature of Part III. of the Bill that he could not refrain from joining issue with the hon. Member on that ground. Part III. provided that, if the county councils unanimously so decided, they could have a joint board to deal with local Bills affecting Wales. The provision at first sight seemed harmless enough. But let the House remember that the Welsh county councils had unanimously agreed to withhold rate aid from all elementary non-provided schools in the Principality, and although a minority was strongly opposed to that policy their views had no attention whatever. Was it the intention of the promoters of the Bill that a similar state of affairs should be possible in regard to private Bill legislation? There were not many Welsh Conservative Members of Parliament, but on their behalf he wished to point out that the interests of the rural and urban districts often differed materially, and a joint board would not ensure an adequate representation of both their interests. He hoped, therefore, that Part III. of the Bill would be withdrawn. If that were done the measure would receive the unanimous support of all the Members for Wales. Personally he was strongly in favour of devolution in the case of Welsh private business, but he feared that as this Bill was framed it would enable the majorities on the county councils to tyrannise over the minorities, and therefore unless Part III. was withdrawn he hoped the Government would reject the measure.

*MR. EUGENE WASON (Clackmannan and Kinross) said he was convinced, from his personal experience both of private Bill work and the work of the Police and Sanitary Committee in the House of Commons, in which he had served a long apprenticeship under the Chairmanship of the President of the Local Government Board some twelve years ago, as well as of the working of the Scottish Act, that the private legislation of Scotland was done as well and efficiently by the Commissioners as it could be done by the House of Commons. Opinion in Scotland was unanimous that the Act was an unqualified success, and there was every reason to suppose that a similar measure would be equally beneficial to Wales. Of course it was absolutely necessary that the control of Parliament must be preserved, and it was preserved by the present Bill; but if a Private bill, after having been heard before the Commissioners, was re-debated in the House, the procedure would be useless. In the case of Scotland attempts had been made, in the House, to reverse the decisions of the Commissioners, but in every instance the good sense of the House assured that no injustice had been done, had refused the proposed rehearing. There was a popular idea that it was a remunerative thing to be a Commissioner. The modest remuneration was £1 a day for subsistence money and travelling expenses, and the Commissioner was not even allowed to charge a "tip" to a porter. Clearly it was not very remunerative employment on which to take away a Member of that House from his home and Parliamentary duties. He hoped the House would give the Bill a Second Reading. There was no intention on the part of hon. Members for Wales to deprive any part of England of the same privilege should they desire to have it. He believed that an extension of this system of devolution would be of great advantage to the community and a great saving of the time and labour of the House. He did not consider there was any necessity whatever for an inquiry into the working of the Scotch Act.

MR. EDWARDS (Radnor) also hoped most sincerely that the Bill would be read a second time. Much had been said by hon. Members opposite with regard to Part III., which they alleged to be the thin end of the wedge of Home Rule. He thought there was far too much fear expressed as to the effect of that particular provision. After all, it only proposed to substitute the members of a joint county council board for Commissioners appointed under the ordinary Scottish procedure. It only, in fact, substituted one kind of official for another, and, if this Bill were open to the suggestion that it savoured of Home Rule, the Scottish Bill was equally liable to the same suspicion. The hon. Member for Shropshire had spoken round and round the Bill: he seemed to be favourable to it and yet he managed to urge a great many arguments against it. They were to his mind rather out of date, and had they had any force in them they would have been fatal to the passing of the Scottish Act on which this Bill was based. He pointed out the difficulty which would prevail of distinguishing between matters solely Welsh and those which affected adjoining parts of England, but the same difficulty surely existed in the case of Scotland, but, in fact, in actual working it had not been found to exist under the Scottish procedure. The opposition to the Bill was very ingenious; it was an attempt to smother it with kindness. Everybody seemed to be in favour of it yet somehow or other the Bill did not appear likely to get through. The hon. Member for South Glamorgan told them that if they could only get rid of Part III. the Bill would not be objected to, and the hon. Member for Shropshire said the same thing. Well, he was bound to say that the fear of injury to be created by that part of the Bill was very much exaggerated. But even if Part III. were dropped would they be any better off? They still had to deal with the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Somerset, who wanted to shelve the whole thing by having an inquiry held into the procedure under the Scottish Act. He believed the Government were willing to accept the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman, but having regard to what had been said in that House with regard to the Scottish system there did not seem to be any necessity for an inquiry. The Scottish procedure had, in fact, worked well; there had been no complaint made in regard to it, and the present Secretary for Scotland, when he brought in the Bill establishing it, clearly contemplated the extension of the system to other parts of the United Kingdom. He said he quite looked forward to the time when it would be found that the procedure initiated by the Scotch Bill would be justified by its adoption by the rest of the United Kingdom. He added—

> "Scotland is ripe for this Bill; but I do not think that that can be said of any other part of the United Kingdom."

Well, he did not think the right hon. Gentleman was right there, for in Wales they were ripe for this Act. They were entitled to claim that this House should give them this Bill which they were now asking for. The Bill was absolutely based on precedent. They were following the Scotch Act, and were not asking the House to take any very serious plunge of a dangerous kind. The controversy had been over Part III. of the Bill, and there the fears of hon. Members were not justified by the facts. The Bill was really a measure of a kind which they all said they were anxious for. It was a small sample of devolution. Hon. Members opposite said they were quite ready for a system of devolution; but he noticed that when they gave them a concrete instance of devolution, they had some particular reason why it should not take effect. Devolution was obviously desirable, because it relieved the burden on Parliament and the Government Departments, and developed capacity for local self-government, which was very important. The extension of local self-government not only relieved the central Administration, which was a good thing, but it also strengthened the local authority to which the power was transferred, because by increasing the importance and adding to the dignity of that authority they attracted better men to do its work. When the Scotch Act was before this House, Mr. Courtney, a Member who possessed experience and knowledge of such matters second to none, said that so long as private Bill legislation was connected with that House it would be uncertain, dilatory and costly. Those were three damaging charges to bring against the private Bill procedure in that House, and accepting them as based on fact, it was high time that the system was changed. Like the hon. Member for the Swansea District, he could say that people in his constituency had had experience of the inconveniences of the present private Bill procedure, and it was these inconveniences they wanted to avoid in future. Many proposals which came to Parliament for inquiry could very well be dealt with on the spot. Decentralisation such as that proposed would serve as a public advantage and as a means of cheapening legislation. There was no doubt that the debts of municipalities were largely added to by the present costly system of private Bill legislation, and because this Bill would tend to relieve them in that respect he heartily supported its Second Reading.

*Sɪʀ JOSEPH LAWRENCE (Monmouth Boroughs) associated himself with the views of the hon. Members from Wales in advocating this Bill. Those of them who had had the somewhat painful experience of the costliness of private Bill legislation could hardly fail to be impressed with the necessity for some such measure of devolution. He had a keen remembrance of some twenty years ago, in connection with the Manchester Ship Canal Bill. As one of the founders of the scheme, he and his friends had to face an expenditure of some hundreds of thousands of pounds in carrying that Bill through Parliament during three sessions. He also had a recollection at or about the same time of the enormous expenditure that was occasioned to the people of South Wales in the promotion of the Barry Docks Bill. He thought it would be a graceful concession on the part of the Government if they could see their way to assent to the Second Reading of the Bill, and, by affirming its principle, to that extent lay the foundation of some arrangement by which private Bill legislation could be dealt with for the whole of the country hereafter. A beginning had to be made somewhere, and the hon. Member for the Swansea district had shown how it could be dealt with in Wales, where they had a distinct area. If any scheme was hereafter proposed for the whole of the Kingdom, the country would have to be divided into areas, on lines similar to those suggested for Wales and Monmouthshire. As to the objection which was felt to Part III. of the Bill, he understood the other side were willing to waive that if the Bill were read a second time. In any case, whatever alteration was needed in the machinery of the Bill, so long as the principle of devolution was preserved, could very well be left to the Local Government Board to arrange with the promoters. It was unnecessary to detain the House further by labouring the principle of devolution, as that would only be proving a self-evident proposition, since there was a general consensus of opinion that something in the direction of devolution must be attempted.

Mʀ. THOMAS SHAW (Hawick Burghs) said that in view of the express reference to Scotland in the Amendment he might be permitted to speak of the working of the Act of 1899 in the North. It was a mistake to suppose that that Act was introduced in anything like the shape in which it emerged from the House. It had to be drastically altered, and its final appearance was the result of consultation with all quarters of the House. When that Act was before the House much the same kind of argument was put forward as on the present occasion. Fears were expressed that Members would not be found ready to go to Scotland, and those fears had been proved to be groundless. On behalf of all classes in Scotland he desired to thank Members of both Houses of Parliament for their services since the Act came into operation, and to none were they more grateful than to the hon. Member for Clackmannan and Kinross. As to the experience of Scotland, he could state it in a very few sentences. In 1901 thirteen Bills were locally tried, in 1902 nine, and in 1903 twelve, and when it was stated that those twelve Bills dealt with such matters as water supply, railway communication, markets, slaughter-houses, tramways, police, and corporation details, it would be seen that they were most usefully dealt with in the localities concerned. The Commissioners sat for eighteen days in 1901, seventeen days in 1902, and twenty-one days in 1903. The experience had been so satisfactory that if anyone suggested a reversion to the old system it would be thought that he had taken leave of his senses. With regard to the present measure, there appeared to be absolute unanimity on the part of Wales, with a plea for annexation from Monmouth. He entirely agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Hallam Division of Sheffield, that justice should be brought as far as possible to the doors of the people, that the duplication and triplication of appeals to this House should be discouraged, and that the superiority of Parliament should be recognised. He rather objected to the extra-Parliamentary panel. He viewed with considerable alarm any proposition to increase the extra-Parliamentary panel if it was not a substantially elected panel like that appointed by the county council. In Scotland the supplementary panel had been resorted to on rare occasions, and he should look with hesitation upon any proposal for an increase of a nominated panel. The framers of the Bill had carefully copied an extreme example of Scottish caution contained in the Scottish Act, but the restrictive power allowed to Chairmen of Committees had been carried to a dangerous extent. Sub-section 2 of Clause 2 had been copied from the Scotch Bill and it provided that—

> "If it appears from the report of the Chairmen that either of the Chairmen is of opinion that the provisions or some provisions of the draft Order do not relate wholly or mainly to Wales, or are of such a character or magnitude, or raise any such question of policy or principle, that they ought to be dealt with by private Bill and not by Provisional Order, the Local Government Board shall, without further inquiry, refuse to issue the Provisional Order, so far as the same is objected to by the Chairmen or Chairman."

That was conferring a somewhat dangerous power upon the Chairmen of Committees. With regard to the Scotch Bill the only point upon which he could discern any dissatisfaction in Scotland was that there were not more Bills in the shape of Provisional Orders, and the Chairmen of Committees seemed to be getting too firm a hand in relegating matters to private Bill inquiry instead of to Provisional Order inquiry. In the year 1901 they rejected seven measures, in 1902 seven, and in 1903 they rejected eight or nine measures. He recommended his friends from Wales to look carefully at the language of Sub-section 2 of Clause 2, which appeared to him to give an exclusive power to the Chairman of Committees in both Houses which was of a somewhat dangerous kind. He would ike to see more inquiries conducted in Scotland, and even though a Bill affected in a slight degree interests on the other side of the border, when the substance of the Bill dealt with a Scottish matter. Moderation had been the order in his Welsh friend's proposal, and if precedent was followed this Bill should be passed. The Amendment asked that a Select Committee should inquire into Scotch experience which was only three years in extent, and which could be stated in a very few sentences. At the time the Scotch Bill was before the House it was said that they were introducing a Scotch revolution and that what was being asked for Scotland would be demanded for Northumberland and other places. Nevertheless Scotland persisted and got its own measure and it had done very well. He did not see why the Government should not reject this Amendment and accept the Bill.

MR. WILLIAM JONES (Carnarvonshire, Arfon) said that as far as he could gather from the tenor of the debate almost every hon. Gentleman who had spoken had declared in favour of the principle of the Bill, and they were all most emphatic upon the point of devolution and relieving the congestion of private Bill legislation in Parliament. Every hon. Member who had spoken for Wales was also in favour of the Bill. The hon. Member for Sheffield had urged the Government to adopt the principle of the Bill and give it a Second Reading. He did not see why the Government should not adopt that course, and the right hon. Gentleman might then send it to a Select Committee as a measure representing the unanimous opinion of the whole nation.

Sir SAMUEL HOARE (Norwich) said the hon. Member opposite stated that more Provisional Orders might very well be granted to Scotland, and he urged the House to take a more liberal view of this question. That re-opened a matter which he ventured to bring before the House when the Bill for private legislation for Scotland was first proposed. At that time he told the House that, if they began by allowing certain questions to be decided in Scotland by such a procedure as the Bill set up, they would very soon have a demand for an extension of that procedure to other parts of the country. Of course when the Bill came up for the Second Reading he found that many objections he had to the measure had been removed, and he voted for it, but at the same time he pointed out that, if they gave this Bill to Scotland, they might have a similar demand from Wales and various portions of England, and that it would constitute a very great change in the whole of their private Bill procedure. He asked the House before accepting the Bill to satisfy itself that the Scottish system had worked satisfactorily. His own experience led him to suppose that there had been difficulties in its operation, and created doubts in his mind whether it would be wise to divide the United Kingdom into sections for the purpose of private Bill inquiries. From the experience he had had through sitting as Chairman of a Committee of the House, he was inclined to think that the Act did not work satisfactorily. He remembered particularly two Scotch Bills relating to one or two localities in reference to harbours on the same coast, and they took the Bills together. There was a third Bill connected with the same question being dealt with in Scotland, and he was obliged, as Chairman, with the approval of his Committee, to call attention to the difficulty in coming to a decision with reference to those two Bills, because the third Bill was being investigated in Scotland. That was evidence that they did require some inquiry to see whether, in every case, those Bills which had been decided upon in Scotland by the procedure laid down in the Scottish Private Bill Procedure Act were satisfactory. The hon. and learned Gentleman said it was desirable that they should have those inquiries as near to the doors of the people interested in the matter as possible, and he implied that he would like to see all the private Bill legislation carried out in Scotland.

Mr. THOMAS SHAW said certainly he should like to see many more Bills dealt with in Scotland.

Sir SAMUEL HOARE said they often had to consider cases where the local feeling was extremely strong. The hon. and learned Gentleman had stated that they were very much indebted to certain hon. Gentlemen who had assisted them in these Committees. When the Committee of the House dealt with railways and canals, if they took a group of Welsh Bills one year, next year they would take a group of English Bills or Scotch Bills. He still thought there were many advantages in such questions being dealt with by a Committee of the House, and if they were going to extend this system of private Bill procedure in various districts they should do so with very great care and caution. He wished to know whether it was an easy thing to get Members of Parliament to go down to take these local inquiries. If such inquiries were held in Wales or in the north and south of England they might find the tax on Members of Parliament more than they would be able conveniently to carry out. The House should remember that this proposal for Wales meant a proposal for dividing England into various sections for these inquiries with reference to Private Bill legislation, and he thought that would prove a very serious matter. At any rate he thought the House would be well advised to ascertain exactly, not merely from hon. Members representing Scotland, but from the officials of this House, whether the Scotch Bill had worked in every way satisfactorily. He did not see that the adoption of this Amendment would cause any long delay. His own experience was that difficulties did occur owing to the fact that one Bill was being decided in Scotland whereas it was their duty to decide on two other Bills closely allied to the same subject elsewhere. He quite appreciated the reasons why hon. Members from Wales had brought forward this Bill, but, if they wanted a really good working Bill, he did not think their interests would be in any way injured by waiting until they had ascertained how the Scotch Bill had worked.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) said he did not know whether it would be possible to have a Return showing what the burden of private Bill legislation had been upon Members of the House at Westminster. His hon. friend had referred to the tax upon Members involved by having to go to Scotland to take inquiries. He should be very sorry for the hon. Member if he had to go so far north, but he thought Scotch Members would be found ready to make up any Committees in Scotland. The working of the Scotch Act had been so fairly described by hon. Members representing Scotland that he would not detain the House further upon that subject, but he felt it would be a great advantage, in dealing with this question, if they could know exactly what the burden of this private Bill work was upon hon. Members who were doing the ordinary work of the House. In considering this point he thought the right hon. Gentleman opposite would admit that the work entailed upon Members of this House with respect to inquiries and Committees and Commissions of all kinds was much greater than it used to be. Most admirable inquiries had been held in late years by the various Departments, and the only regret was that more of those inquiries had not been transformed into law. When he served upon the Private Bill Committee he did feel that it was a disadvantage to Members of this House, and he concluded that so far as they could limit the work of private Bill legislation so far would it tend to the efficiency of the work of Parliament. The time of Members of Parliament would be far more usefully employed upon other work than that of private Bills. He did not think there was any harm in the provision for adding to the Committee some members from the outside, because they were frequently able to fall back upon men admirably qualified to serve on such Committees who were not Members of Parliament. The Scotch Act had reduced the work laid upon Parliament, and what had been found to work admirably in Scotland might very well be extended to other portions of the United Kingdom. He would remind hon. Members representing England that in Scotland they had suffered much inconvenience in the past through having to bring local matters to London for inquiry. Local inquiries were of especial importance to outlying portions of the kingdom which were a long distance from London, and he was sure that what had worked well in Scotland would work well in Wales.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. WALTER LONG, Bristol, S.) said he was sure they would all regret the absence of the hon. Member for Cardigan, who had taken such a great interest in this question. The hon. Member who moved the Second Reading of this Bill had done so in a speech of fairness and moderation and great clearness, and he had dealt with it as completely and clearly as it was possible for anyone to put the case. The speeches which had been made showed conclusively that there was a general desire in all quarters of the House that some solution of this question should be found. He did not suggest that the Welsh Members were not fully justified in pressing their own case on behalf of the Principality, when they had been fortunate enough to find an opportunity of introducing the question at a comparatively early period of the session. He did not intend to say anything which would in any way depart from the agreeable and uncontroversial tone, or from the line of general agreement which had been so marked in recommending this Bill to the House, but while not departing from the line of general agreement with the principle, he would point out some of the difficulties that stood in the way of actual and practical acceptance of the Bill. The hon. and learned Gentleman who moved the Second Reading of this Bill observed that he had on many occasions enlightened the House upon the history of Wales and her claim to be regarded as a separate entity for various purposes. It had been said by some hon. Members that this Bill contained a proposal in Part III. which was open to the suspicion of Home Rule. He did not think he needed to take up any time debating that side of the question. Part III. was an entire departure from the Scottish precedent, and if that were retained he should feel bound to resist the Second Reading. He did not stay to consider the suspicion that this part of the Bill contained a germ of Home Rule; he thought that a joint board of county councils would not be the proper authority for the purpose of inquiry. The hon. and learned Member who moved the Second Reading said he had himself been appointed as a Commissioner in Scotland and had attended more than once. From that hon. Members would see that the Scotch procedure adopted a principle which was departed from by the Bill before the House, because under the Scotch procedure the Commissioners were drawn from this House from all parts of the United Kingdom, whilst the proposal under Part III. of this Bill proposed that the Commissioners shall be drawn only from Wales. That was one of the most important principles of the Scotch proposal and one which they could not accept in its altered form in this Bill. He was not sure whether Part III. was considered to be an important part of this Bill or not. An appeal had been made to him to allow this Bill to be read a second time and to be sent to a Select Committee. It was impossible for him to consider that appeal so long as the retention of Part III. of the Bill was in doubt. If they were to consider solely the application of the Scotch principle, in whole or in part, that appeal might be well worthy of consideration, but if in conjunction with that proposal, there was a proposal to set up a joint county board in which would be vested powers which were now vested in the Commissioners, then the situation was changed, and so far as the Bill was concerned his duty towards it was to oppose it.

Mr. Walter Long.

He thought, of course, that the general question, which he ventured to say was of greater and wider importance, was not affected by considerations restricted to the Bill. His hon. friend the Member for Clackmannan had referred to the experience which they had had as members of the Police and Sanitary Committee. He ventured to say that no one who had served on that Committee and who had had experience of the work, would say at the end of two or three years that he had not formed the impression that there must be considerable devolution in regard to the discharge of the private Bill business of the House. His hon. friend would remember that when they finished their labours last year, when he had the privilege of being Chairman of the Committee, they discussed more than once whether it would not be competent or desirable for them to make a Report which would tend in the direction of some reform of that kind, and they only abstained from making a Report because they felt that it was not within their proper function to take that course. That experience made him sympathetic towards any proposal which had for its object the devolution of the private Bill work of the House, but that experience carried them further than the proposals in this Bill. His right hon. friend who moved the Amendment, pointed out with unanswerable force, and with the knowledge which he possessed above the majority of his fellow Members, that there ought to be an even greater reform than that connected with the adoption of the Scotch system.

The private Bill work of this House ought to be divided into two classes. Already there was with respect to some of the local work the Provisional Order system. He was confident that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton, if he had been present, would have said, as he had often said before, that any real reform in regard to private Bill work ought to be partly in the development of the Provisional Order system and partly in the direction of the Scotch procedure system. The hon. and learned Gentleman the late Solicitor-General for Scotland, did not appear to have carefully read the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for

East Somerset, and in the second place he appeared to misapprehend altogether what the Amendment asked the House to say. The hon. and learned Gentleman said he could tell the House in a few minutes what the experience of Scotland had been in regard to private Bill business. They believed the new system had worked admirably there, but what the House wanted to know was whether the system could be applied to other parts of the Kingdom. The hon. and learned Gentleman suggested to the House, and, he had no doubt, with full justification, that if the Act had been a great success in Scotland, it was not so much due to the inception of it on that side of the House as to the correction of it on his side. They would not now discuss where the larger share of the honour rested but be content with the knowledge that the Act had been a success. He would indicate one detail which would show to the House how different were the circumstances of England and Scotland. He could not say off-hand how many Bills had come before the Scotch procedure panel.

MR. THOMAS SHAW: Usually about a dozen.

MR. WALTER LONG said that the House would realise that the demand for local legislation was very much greater in England than in Scotland. The number each session from England and Wales was something like 200. That showed at once how dangerous it would be without further information to apply to the other parts of the kingdom a system which had worked well in regard to a dozen Bills. The need for a remedy was realised by all who knew how large a proportion private Bills formed of Parliamentary work. The number of private Bills, it was true, had not increased very much in the course of the last ten years, but they had become very much more expensive than they formerly were. As the hon. Member for Leith had pointed out, there was not only a large demand on the time of Members in connection with Committees on private Bills, but there was an increasing demand for Committees to inquire into abstract questions and general Bills, and it was difficult to get Members to form the Committees which were required. There was, undoubtedly, in all quarters of the House a general consensus of opinion that reform was required, and that the Scotch system gave them, at all events, a good basis to go upon. The question they had to discuss was not whether in the abstract the Scotch system had been successful, but whether this Bill which proposed to apply the principle to Wales as it was now applied to Scotland, should be read a second time or not. He could not give his consent to Part III., but he did not know whether hon. Members desired that the Bill should be read with that as an integral part of it, or on the understanding that it was dropped. He thought that consideration would affect the view in regard to the Bill of many of his hon. friends on that side of the House who had supported the principle of devolution, but who had consistently condemned Part III., which proposed to set up a body on lines of which they did not approve.

He would not stop now to discuss Part III., because he wanted to tell the House the line which he thought they ought to follow. What they wanted to know was how far they would be justified in accepting the Bill as an expression of the desire that there should be a further reform of private Bill procedure and of the way in which that reform should immediately proceed. Hon. Members who had supported the Second Reading had in almost every instance admitted that if this Bill were adopted for Wales it must obviously be adopted for other parts of the country. Let the House remember what the position in that case would be. He took Lancashire and Yorkshire, the two counties which were most frequently referred to. The hon. and learned Gentleman who moved the Second Reading said he thought that Wales required to ask for more legislation than any other part of the kingdom of equal size and population. That was strictly accurate. The figures were somewhat remarkable. The population of Lancashire was a little over 4,400,000, and the Bills from that county were twenty-one; the population of Yorkshire was 3,500,000, and the Bills were eighteen; and Wales with a population of 1,700,000 had thirteen Bills. He asked the

House to remember what they were asked to do. They were asked to provide new machinery which would make it cheaper, simpler, and easier, to get private Bills through. The Scotch system which they were asked to adopt reserved to Parliament not only the ultimate control, but the right of exercising an independent discretion over those Bills, and the link with Parliament was formed in a valuable way by having Members of Parliament on the spot to hold the inquiries. If there was a case for Wales, there was obviously a case for Lancashire and Yorkshire, and for the rest of the country. Hon. Gentlemen cheered that, and they said they were willing to concede it. He had no doubt they were. He was addressing himself to the practical question. If they were going to have panels for Lancashire and Yorkshire, and other counties, or combinations of counties, there would no longer be any trouble about insufficient accommodation for Members of this House. There would be ample room because Members would be sitting in provincial towns doing their work there.

It was because he believed the adoption of the narrow principle of this Bill would weaken rather than strengthen the case for reform that he agreed with his right hon. friend in asking the House to pause before adopting it. He was rather surprised to hear the hon. and learned Member for the Hawick Burghs urge that the case of Wales stood practically on all fours with that of Scotland. It would not be denied by hon. Gentlemen opposite that he did his best to help Wales at the time of the passing of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act. He could well understand that on such a question as that, in regard to which local sentiment differed so much in the Principality from what it was in the adjoining counties, there was necessity for exceptional legislation, but he found it more difficult to realise the need of the demand on the part of Wales for separate treatment in any other case. Scotland and England were on the question of local laws totally different. Scotland had her own Bar, and her own laws. The system of local government there was quite different from that of England, and if he might say so without disrespect to his own part of the United Kingdom, it was very much better. The public health law in Scotland differed from that of England. But in Wales the system of local government was the same, and the public health law was the same. For purely administrative purposes England and Wales were one, and he could not see what justification there was for a special tribunal to deal alone with Wales. Not only that, but it seemed to him that Wales had no special claim if they looked at the question from a practical point of view. Surely they were more likely to get a good reform if they endeavoured to find a system applicable to the whole country than if they gave Wales this system, and left the rest of the country to be dealt with afterwards. When his hon. and learned friend the Secretary for Scotland brought in the Scotch Bill he laid it down that the principle that nationality ought not to be the guiding principle in setting up a special system for private Bill procedure. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the Hawick Burghs said they did not want any more information about the working of the Scotch Act. But they did want to know whether there was a difficulty in obtaining the services of Members of Parliament, whether the number of Members who served might not be decreased, and whether the extra-Parliamentary panel might be increased, and they desired to have some information with regard to that portion of the work which was done by the Government Departments before any application was made to this House. They also wished to know whether it would be desirable to divide England and Wales into two or three areas, so that panels of Commissioners might do the whole of the private Bill work in those areas. That was not an unreasonable suggestion to make. He would not refuse this Bill a Second Reading on the ground of sentiment; but if it was proposed to carry the Bill through its subsequent stages, then he thought it would make it more difficult for them to deal with the whole question.

He did not believe there was in any quarter a disposition to say "No" to this demand, if it was established that Wales ought to have separate treatment for herself. The suggestion had been made that the Amendment of his right hon. friend was a dilatory Amendment. He had to say in the most emphatic way, speaking not only for himself, but for the Government, that in accepting and adopting the Amendment of his right hon. friend, they not only did so in no dilatory spirit, but with the most emphatic repudiation of anything of the kind. It would be said, no doubt, by those who wished to be controversial, that the Government were not enthusiastic in this matter, and they might be asked why they did not bring forward the proposal themselves. The answer was obvious. There were many questions which they, like every other Government, would like to deal with, but they could only deal with a certain number. Nobody on this side of the House denied to hon. Members from Wales all the credit they deserved for the industry which had led to the production of the Bill. This was an opportunity which should be utilised not only for the benefit of Wales, but for the whole United Kingdom. They believed that hon. Members opposite should accept the Committee as a genuine and *bona fide* proposal. The Committee would be immediately set up, and the reference to it could be so drawn that the inquiry would not be of a prolonged character. The result of the inquiry might be to give the House a practical proposal, and that, surely, would be something gained from the point of view of Wales. The hon. Member for Carnarvon had suggested that the Bill should be read a second time and sent to a Select Committee, but there were difficulties in the way of adopting that course. If the fact that the Bill was read a second time was to be regarded as a precedent, he thought that would be rather a dangerous course to take, because it would mean the adoption of a principle without careful examination of the way in which it was to be worked out. That was an objection which might be placed on one side, but if they sent the Bill to a Select Committee they could not then send to the Committee the reference which his right hon. friend had suggested.

MR. WILLIAM JONES said he understood that the Amendment suggested that there should be a Select Committee appointed to make inquiry. Why not send this Bill to that Committee?

MR. WALTER LONG said he was afraid that would be impossible. The reference to the Select Committee would be to inquire into the working of the Scotch system, and how far it was applicable to other parts of the kingdom. He spoke subject to correction, but he did not think that their Parliamentary procedure would enable them to refer to that Committee a Bill which dealt only with a portion of the subject. He would undertake on behalf of the Government that this Select Committee should be appointed with the least possible delay, that the reference to it should be one which would promote its work and not postpone this question, and that the Government would be prepared, to the best of their ability, to give effect to the recommendations of the Committee. He suggested, in order that hon. Gentlemen opposite might save their Bill, that the debate should be adjourned. That would keep the Bill alive, and, if the Select Committee were to report in favour of granting to Wales a separate private Bill procedure, it could then be referred to the usual Committee for its further examination. He believed that course would meet the needs of all concerned. Were the Welsh Members asked to give up very much when they were asked to accept that proposal? If the Bill were read a second time did they believe, with their knowledge of the working of the House, that it was the least likely it would go any further? They would wrangle where there was no need to wrangle. All that was wanted was to find the most practical way to do what they all desired to do. He hoped, he was sure, that the House would believe that he made this proposal in the utmost good faith, and not with the least desire to save the face of the Government. If they went to a division on this question, which he sincerely trusted they would not do, hon. Members would vote as they thought fit, and without any pressure from the Government. So far as he was personally concerned he would support the Amendment, but he would not do so out of any feeling of hostility to Wales, nor even out of any actual dislike to the proposal in the Bill.

What was wanted was the division of the country into two or three areas, for the purpose of the classification of local government work. If that were done, Parliament might be relieved of much of the work which could not be overtaken now. The reform must be extended, not only to Wales, but to the rest of the United Kingdom.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs) said he was very glad to hear the President of the Local Government Board declare that he was prepared to make this an open question.

MR. WALTER LONG: On the understanding that Part III. is not before us.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would accept the suggestion of the hon. Member for Carnarvon. So far as he could see there would be no difficulty in applying the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman by way of an Instruction to the Select Committee; and, supposing the Second Reading was taken, it did not commit the House to Part III. What he was afraid of was, that if the Amendment was accepted and the Bill rejected, the scope of the inquiry would be limited. His hon. friend wanted an inquiry into the best method of dealing with private Bill procedure, not only for Wales, but for the whole of the United Kingdom, whereas the hon. Member for Norwich would confine the inquiry exclusively as to how the Act had worked in Scotland. The Scotch system could not really be extended to every part of the United Kingdom; but if they were going to inquire into 200 or 300 Bills, and send Members here, there, and everywhere during the session, the system would be unworkable. He did not object to an inquiry into the working of the Scotch system, but he thought the inquiry ought to go beyond that, and examine into every other method of procedure. It was perfectly clear that something ought to be done. It was really a perfect scandal that so many little towns had been practically crippled for generations owing to the cost of private Bill legislation. He knew of a town in Wales where the Local Government Board forced upon it a very extensive waterworks scheme, when they ought to have been contented with a much more modest scheme. The population of that town was only 1,000 or 1,200, and it cost them £2 or £3 per head for the purpose of obtaining the powers which the Local Government Board forced upon them. The rates had increased 10s. in the £, and the town was on the brink of bankruptcy. The hon. Member for Shropshire supported the Amendment and seemed to argue against the Bill. The hon. Gentleman appeared to object to Shrewsbury being made a common meeting ground for Welsh Members and others who desired to cheapen private Bill procedure. He remembered that the Welsh princes visited Shrewsbury once in every twenty years or so to burn the town, and he was not surprised at that, if the ancestors of the hon. Gentleman used to make speeches about Wales like he did. He trusted, therefore, that the President of the Local Government Board would give them a Second Reading of the Bill in order that the whole matter might be discussed upstairs. In regard to Part III., that was in the hands of the Government. He understood that his hon. and learned friend did not object to the elimination of Part III. of the Bill, but it must not be taken that they agreed to its elimination because they thought it was not the best way of carrying out what they desired. He hoped the Government would consent to the course he had suggested.

Mr. HENRY HOBHOUSE said that the proposal of the hon. Member opposite was agreeable to him, and he asked leave to withdraw his Amendment in order that it might be moved as an Instruction to the Select Committee.

Sir FREDERICK BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said he thought it would be out of order to commit a Bill to the Select Committee with an Instruction to inquire into something which had happened in Scotland, wholly outside the Bill.

Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said that there were precedents for committing two Bills not consistent with one another.

* Mr. SPEAKER said he understood it was proposed that the Bill should be read a second time, and then committed to a Select Committee. That of course could be done but no Motion for appointing the Committee, or for an instruction to that Committee, could be made without notice. He would consider the terms of any such Motion when it appeared on the Paper, but, speaking generally, he thought it would not be found impossible to carry out the Intentions of hon. Members, either by way of an ordinary Instruction, or by way of a substantive Resolution referring the other subject-matter to the Committee which was dealing with the Bill.

Mr. WALTER LONG said that by leave of the House he would suggest a way out of the difficulty they were in. He accepted the perfectly fair declaration of the hon. Member for Carnarvon. He understood that by mutual agreement Part III. of the Bill would be put on one side without prejudice. [Mr. Brynmor Jones: I said so.] The Bill would then remain simply a proposal for the reform of private Bill procedure, following the example of Scotland. The question was how to secure that the Bill would not be destroyed, and at the same time to keep the field open for a wider inquiry. He suggested that the Bill should be read a second time and referred to a Select Committee, but that it should be understood that that Committee should not be asked for until the reference had been agreed upon on the lines of the Amendment moved by his right hon. friend.

Mr. HENRY HOBHOUSE asked leave to withdraw his Amendment on that understanding.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Select Committee.

SHOPS BILL.

[Second Reading].

Order for Second Reading read.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said that in moving the Second Reading of this Bill he had to state to the House that there were two Bills at the present moment before Parliament on this subject. He wished he could say that they had a third one, because the Government had pledged themselves to the introduction of a Bill on the subject, and it would not have been necessary for him to have moved the Second Reading of this Bill that day but for the extraordinary paralysis which had overtaken Government legislation, and which had hitherto prevented them from bringing in the measures promised in the King's Speech. It was an unheard-of thing that Easter should be reached without the days being fixed for the introduction of the Bills mentioned in the King's Speech. The date for the introduction of the Workman's Compensation Bill and their Shops Bill had not been fixed or announced. When the late Colonial Secretary left the Government after driving his enemies out of it the legislative capacity of the Government seemed to have departed with him. Some insects had the capacity of stinging another insect into a state of coma; the Government appeared to have been driven into a state of legislative coma. He should like to state to the House what was the Parliamentary position on the subject of shops, the need of legislation on which was universally admitted—with the exception, perhaps, of the hon. Baronet the Member for Peckham. When the Bill was formerly before Parliament they had to prove the evils which were admitted now. Those who used to be most opposed to legislation for short hours in shops were represented by the late Lord Salisbury, but even he had been led by examination of the evidence given before the Committee of the House of Lords, to concur in the evils of late hours in shops. The Select Committee of the House of Lords stated that, in the opinion of the Presidents of the Royal College of Physicians and of the Royal College of Surgeons, there was an urgent need for legislation on this subject, and that Committee also decided unanimously that the hours in shops could be greatly and safely reduced by legislation. They also stated, what they could not have stated a few years ago, that the shopkeepers, quite as much as the assistants, now urgently desired legislation of this kind. In 1892 the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, who had long taken a considerable interest in this question, pledged himself on behalf of the Unionist Party to immediate legislation. At that time he only spoke in general terms, of general action, and general legislation; but in 1894, speaking at Liverpool, he said he was in favour of local option on the hours of shopkeepers, and of their assistants. The Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Lord Avebury's Bill was a very remarkable one, because it not only admitted the evils which existed, but contained an operative programme. The Report stated that the evidence had convinced the Committee that early closing would be an immense boon to the shopkeepers and shop assistants, and that the present hours were grievously injurious to health, and under these circumstances they recommended the Early Closing Bill to the favourable consideration of their Lordships' House. Lord Salisbury moved to strike out the words "The Early Closing Bill," and carried unanimously the insertion of the recommendation—

"That town councils should be authorised to pass Provisional Orders making such regulations" as might seem to them to be necessary for the areas under their jurisdiction, and that—

> "These Provisional Orders should be submitted to Parliament in the usual manner for confirmation and acquiring the force of law."

When Lord Avebury's second Bill, into which he had put additional restrictions without leaving out the old ones, reached this House last year, after passing through the House of Lords, where some unnecessary restrictions were retained even against Lord Avebury's wish, it was blocked by the hon. Baronet the Member for Peckham. Last year, while these matters were occurring in another place, a Motion was brought before the House of Commons which raised the question to which he had referred, and it was the most important question of detail which divided them, namely, whether it was necessary to legislate, as this Bill did, not only for the hours of shops but also for the working hours of shop assistants. The Resolution which was submitted to the House of Commons last year, and unanimously adopted, was as follows—

> "That borough and district councils should be authorised to obtain Provisional Orders making such regulations in respect of the closing of shops and the limitation of the hours of labour of shop-workers as may seem to them to be necessary for the areas under their jurisdiction; thus effectively carrying out the recommendation of the Select Committee of the House of Lords."

This Motion was opposed by the Government on account of those particular words upon which he had laid stress, and the Government were then prepared to accept a general local option Resolution, although they objected to the words "and the limitation of the hours of labour of shop-workers." Nevertheless those words were insisted upon by the House, and the Government unwillingly allowed a Resolution containing those words to be unanimously carried. That was the point to which he desired to specially direct the attention of the House. He should be prepared to withdraw his own Bill if the Government promised a Bill of their own containing a pure local option clause, and if that clause were wide enough to cover the limitation of the hours of shop assistants. What he wanted was a Bill unhampered by the restrictions of Lord Avebury's Bill. This particular Bill had actually been before Parliament for Second Reading in the House of Commons when the noble Lord the Member for Greenwich moved and carried the adjournment on a Party Division. Some hon. Members thought his Bill went too far, and others supported it as it stood. This Bill had the support of every body of organised workers in the country without exception. He thought that was a very important point, because it was often said that restrictions upon shop hours would press heavily upon the working classes. This Bill had been supported year after year by the Trades Union Congress, Scotch Trades Congress, Irish Trades Congress, forty-two trades councils, including all great towns; and, on the employers' side, by the Grocers' Federation, the London Drapers' Chamber of Trade, and many other bodies, who desired the Second Reading, some of them wishing for some Amendment in Committee.

He did not propose to trouble the House with any discussion of the details of this measure. What was essential above all, in this Bill was the principle he had laid stress upon which was contained in the Resolution he had quoted, and which was partly embodied in

Clause 5 and partly in Clause 10. Clause 10 dealt with the length of employment, and it fixed shop hours as factory hours were fixed in the factory legislation of this country. That was the principle to which the Government were opposed. The Government were only prepared to give local option, and their proposals were short of the two clauses to which he had referred. It was, therefore, more honest to say that it was upon the principle contained in those two clauses that there was a sharp division of opinion amongst them. It was not of much value to discuss smaller details, because obviously it was not a measure which a private Member was likely to succeed in carrying through the House. Those details, however, could be threshed out before the Standing Committee. The matter which was really before them was the question whether it was necessary to give local authorities power not only to close shops but also to limit the hours of shop assistants. The working classes had a very strong opinion on the subject, because they thought it would be insufficient to deal only with shop hours without dealing with the hours of shop assistants. At the present time the custom existed of employing shop assistants for a very considerable number of hours after the shops were closed, and there was also work to be done before the shops were opened. Without such a provision as he had suggested, he was afraid there would be the grossest evasion of the law. He begged to move

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*SIR FRANCIS POWELL (Wigan) said that the subject was not new to him, as he had served on Committees and had been interested in similar Bills for many years. The question involved could not be dealt with lightly. It affected adult labour; and it was only after the most complete proof of the most urgent necessity that the House should proceed with such legislation.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE said that the hon. Gentleman must be referring only to male adult labour, as the hours of labour for women had already been dealt with.

*SIR FRANCIS POWELL said he agreed. His second point was that it was a much more serious thing to regulate the distribution of goods than the manufacture of goods, as the former affected the daily lives of the whole population. He confessed that there was a great deal of confusion in the recent report between the new evidence which had been given and the evidence which was given years ago. But mention was made of recent evidence from Liverpool and other places which could not be ignored and which was entitled to the greatest respect. It should be remembered that there was a large amount of labour in this country which was not organised; and he had never been able to understand why the voice of unorganised labour should remain unheard. As to the details of the Bill, he desired to express disapproval of the proposal prohibiting the employment of children under the age of fourteen years. There was abundant evidence given last year that the employment of children under conditions which were not injurious to their health and education was beneficial to them. They were kept away from the dangers of the streets, received a certain amount of discipline which was of value to their general character, the money they earned was of great use to their parents, and they felt a pride, which ought to be encouraged, in increasing the family earnings by their humble and simple contributions. Again, there was not sufficient provision made in the Bill to meet the requirements of different classes of traders. Some trades were more healthy than others. The hardware trade, for instance, was absolutely healthy, but distribution in the case of some other trades was apt to be dangerous to health. All he asked was that they should legislate with caution, and bear in mind the necessity for the most deliberative and vigilant action as they proceeded. There was another provision in the Bill which ought to be excised. That was the clause which provided that any person found in a shop other than a customer should, until the contrary were proved, be regarded as being employed in the shop. That would mean that if a party of ladies went into a West-End shop, and one lady bought a yard of ribbon, the others would be deemed to be in the employment of the shopkeeper until the contrary was proved. That was an illustration of the hasty manner in which the Bill had been prepared. The necessity for legislation as regarded the general principle was fully admitted; and he hoped that the subject would find a place in the Government programme, and that a wise and well considered Bill dealing with it would be passed even before the end of the present session. He begged to move that the Bill be read a second time this day six months.

Sir FREDERICK BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said he had much pleasure in seconding the Motion of his hon. friend, who gave very good grounds why the House should not accept the Second Reading of the Bill. Like his hon. friend, he had been many years interested in the subject, but he had never put his name on the back of a Bill dealing with it. The reason why he objected to the Bill, and to similar Bills in the past, was that he believed it was very hazardous to pass legislation having for its object the limitation of adult labour. He was not prepared to deny that there were evils; but the remedy proposed was a very drastic one and he was not quite sure it was a remedy at all. The right hon. Baronet was in favour of the limitation of hours of labour generally; but hon. Gentlemen on that side of the House were not favourable to any legislation that would prohibit male adults doing the best with their labour. Women and children were in a different position from men; and legislation to limit their hours of labour was not only desirable but necessary.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Sir Francis Powell.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Debate arising.

And, it being half-past Five of the clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Friday, 10th June.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Order for Committee read.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): I object.

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somersetshire, Wellington) said he would appeal to the right hon. and gallant Member to withdraw his objection. It was much to the advantage of public business that the Committee stage of the Appropriation Bill should be got through.

MR. ASQUITH (Fifeshire, E.) asked if the Third Reading of the Consolidated Fund Bill would be taken as first order on Monday.

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD said that the Scottish Education Bill would be first order on Monday; the Consolidated Fund Bill being second.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported without Amendment; to be read the third time upon Monday next.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON said he wished to know whether the Bill to which he had objected had been taken.

WILD BIRDS PROTECTION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Lords' Amendments to be considered forthwith; considered, and agreed to.

THE EASTER RECESS.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.) asked if the House would meet for business on Wednesday.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) asked if a reasonable time would be allowed for the discussion of the Third Reading of the Consolidated Fund Bill on Monday. He wished to impeach the conduct of the Prime Minister with reference to his exercise of the patronage of the Crown.

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD stated that the Scottish Education Bill would be the first order on Monday, and the Consolidated Fund Bill the second. If it was for the convenience of Members, the Government would adjourn the discussion on the Scottish Bill in order to allow time for debate on the Third Reading of the Consolidated Fund Bill, but he reminded hon. Members that the Bill could come on after 12 o'clock. He would consult the Prime Minister with regard to meeting for business on Tuesday evening. He would endeavour to meet the views of hon. Gentlemen, but in the absence of the Leader of the House he could not give a pledge. He hoped the House would be able to rise for the recess on Tuesday night, at any rate.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said it was not quite clear whether the House would adjourn at the morning or the evening sitting on Tuesday.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) said that he hoped the adjournment would be at mid-night, as an important Motion was down for Tuesday evening.

Adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Six o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 28th March, 1904.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—South Shields Gas; Kettering Improvement; Littlestone-on-Sea and District Water.

And also the Certificates that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—Metropolitan Common Scheme (Farnborough) Provisional Order; Metropolitan Common Scheme (Hillingdon East) Provisional Order. The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Weaver Navigation (Additional Finance) Bill [H.L.]. The LORD CHANCELLOR informed the House that the promoters do not intend to proceed further with the Bill. The orders made on the 19th of February and Thursday last discharged. Ordered, That the Bill be not further proceeded with.

Weaver Navigation (Constitution and Finance) Bill [H.L.]. The LORD CHANCELLOR informed the House that the promoters do not intend to proceed further with the Bill. The orders made on the 19th of February and Thursday last discharged. Ordered, That the Bill be not further proceeded with.

New River Company Bill [H.L.]; Victoria University of Yorkshire Bill [H.L.], now University of Leeds Bill [H.L.]; Huddersfield Corporation Act, 1902 (Amendment) Bill [H.L.]; Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company Bill [H.L.]; Gosport Water Bill [H.L.], Victoria University of Manchester Bill [H.L.]. Read 3^{a}, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

No. 3131. Argentine Republic (Finances); No. 3132. Western Pacific (Samoa). Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

LOCOMOTIVES ON HIGHWAYS ACT, 1896, AND MOTOR CAR ACT, 1903.

Regulations of Local Government Board as to registration and licensing of motor cars under Section 6 of the Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896, and Section 7 of the Motor Car Act, 1903.

MOTOR CAR ACTS.

Regulations as to use and construction of motor cars made by the Local Government Board under Section 6 of the Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896.

GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL (RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE).

Returns of the receipts and expenditure of the General Medical Council and of the Branch Councils, also of receipts and expenditure of the Dental Registration Fund, for the year ended 31st December, 1903.

SUPERANNUATION.

Treasury Minute, dated 24th March, 1904, granted a retired allowance to Thomas G. Stuart-French, Upper Division Clerk, Secretary's Office, Post Office, under Section 2 of the Superannuation Act, 1887.

PENAL SERVITUDE ACTS, 1853 TO 1891 (CONDITIONAL LICENCE).

Licence granted by His Majesty to Emma Mary Agnes West, a convict under detention in Aylesbury Prison, permitting her to be at large on condition that she enter the East End Refuge, Finchley, N.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Standing Order No. XXXIX. considered (according to order), and suspended for this day's sitting.

SITE FOR DUKE OF YORK'S SCHOOL BILL [H.L.].

Read 3^a (according to order); Amendments made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

METROPOLITAN IMPROVEMENTS (FUNDS) BILL.

Read 3 (according to order), and passed.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Standing Order No. XXXIX. to be considered To-morrow in order to its being suspended for that day's sitting.

House adjourned during pleasure.

House resumed by the Earl Waldegrave.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1^a. Then (Standing Order No. XXXIX. having been suspended) Bill read 2^a—(*The Lord Windsor*). Committee negatived Bill read 3^a, and passed.

House adjourned at ten minutes past Twelve o'clock a.m. till Three o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 28th March, 1904.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [Lords] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz.:—Barry Railway (Extension of Time, etc.) Bill [Lords]; Ipswich Dock Commission Bill [Lords]; Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Bill [Lords]; Tynemouth Gas Bill [Lords]. Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

Bishop's Stortford and District Gas Bill. Verbal Amendments made; Bill read the third time, and passed.

Great Central and Midland Joint Railways Bill; Sutton Gas Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

Birkdale Improvement Bill; Soothill Nether Urban District Tramways Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Appleby Corporation Gas Bill [Lords]; Govan Burgh (Electricity) Bill [Lords]; London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Bill [Lords]; Young and Bell's Patents Bill [Lords]. Read a second time, and committed.

Brixham Gas Bill (by Order). As amended, considered; an Amendment made; Bill to be read the third time.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1). Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade, under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Barry, Clitheroe, Gainsborough, Glastonbury, Heysham, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Saffron Walden, Walmer, Whickham, and Yardley, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill. "To confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade, under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Barry, Clitheroe, Gainsborough, Glastonbury, Heysham, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Saffron Walden, Walmer, Whickham, and Yardley," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 141.]

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP No. 1).

Mr. KIMBER reported from the Committee on Group No. 1 of Railway Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Thursday, 14th April, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Public Petitions Committee. Fourth Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to—Metropolitan Improvements (Funds) Bill, without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act for extinguishing certain rights of way over certain lands situate in the parish of Guston, in the county of Kent." [Site for Duke of York's School Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to make provision for the application and distribution of the water stock issued to the New River Company in discharge of the sum payable as compensation for the transfer of their water undertaking to the Metropolitan Water Board, for the reconstruction of the company and its registration as a limited company; and for other purposes." [New River Company Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to merge the Yorkshire College in the University of Leeds; and to transfer all the property and liabilities of the Yorkshire College to the University of Leeds; and for other purposes." [University of Leeds Bill [Lords], changed from "Victoria University of Yorkshire Bill [Lords.]"

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the Huddersfield Corporation Act, 1902; and for other purposes." [Huddersfield Corporation Act, 1902 (Amendment) Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to make provision with reference to the registration under the Companies Acts, 1862 to 1900, of the Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company, and the substitution of a memorandum and articles of association for their existing constitution and regulations, and for the repeal of certain Acts relating to such Company; and for other purposes." [Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill. intituled, "An Act to authorise the Gosport Waterworks Company to make additional waterworks; to acquire the undertaking of the Lee-on-the-Solent Waterworks Company, Limited, and to raise additional capital; to extend the limits of supply of the Company; to confer further powers upon the Company; and for other purposes." [Gosport Water Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to incorporate the Owens College, Manchester, with the Victoria University of Manchester; and to transfer all the property and liabilities of the college to the Victoria University of Manchester; and for other purposes." [Victoria University of Manchester Bill [Lords.]

New River Company Bill [Lords]; University of Leeds Bill [Lords]; Huddersfield Corporation Act, 1902 (Amendment) Bill [Lords]; Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company Bill [Lords]; Gosport Water Bill [Lords]; Victoria University of Manchester Bill [Lords]. Read the first time. and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

LICENCES (RENEWAL).

Petitions against alteration of law: from Exeter; Leeds; Liverpool (two); Bristol (two); Bury; Market Drayton; Chelmsford; and Finchley; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF BUTTER BILL.

Petition from Leamington, against; to lie upon the Table.

TRANSVAAL (CHINESE LABOUR ORDINANCE).

Petition from Bury, for withdrawal; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

MEDICAL COUNCILS.

Accounts presented, for 1903, of the General Medical Council and Branch Councils, and of the Dental Registration Fund [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

POLLING DISTRICTS (WEST RIDING OF THE COUNTY OF YORK).

Copy presented, of Order made by the County Council of the West Riding of the County of York altering certain Polling Districts in the Osgoldcross, Skipton, and Barnsley Parliamentary Divisions [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

PENAL SERVITUDE ACTS CONDITIONAL LICENCE.

Copy presented, of Licences granted to Emma Mary Agnes West, a convict under detention in Aylesbury Prison, permitting her to be at large on condition that she enter the East End Refuge, Finchley [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

BOARDS OF GUARDIANS (PERSONS IN RECEIPT OF RELIEF).

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 1st July, 1903; *Mr. Burt*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 113.]

COUNCILS OF BOROUGHS IN ENGLAND AND WALES (INDEBTEDNESS).

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 24th June, 1903; *Mr. John Ellis*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 114.]

LOCOMOTIVES ON HIGHWAYS ACT, 1896, AND MOTOR CAR ACT, 1903.

Copy presented, of Regulations of the Local Government Board as to Registration and Licensing of Motor Cars under Section 6 of the Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896; and Section 7 of the Motor Car Act, 1903 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

LOCOMOTIVES ON HIGHWAYS ACT, 1896, AND MOTOR CAR ACT, 1903.

Copy presented, of Regulations as to Use and Construction of Motor Cars made by the Local Government Board under Section 6 of The Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

WINES IMPORTED.

Return presented, relative thereto [Ordered 29th February; *Sir Thomas Dewar*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.. [No. 115.]

ARMY (ORDNANCE FACTORIES).

Annual Account presented, for the year 1902–3, with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 116.]

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1887.

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 24th March, 1904, granting to Mr. Thomas G. Stuart-French, Upper Division Clerk, Secretary's Office, Post Office, a retiring allowance under the Act [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.

Copy presented, of Annual Report of Proceedings under the Tithe Acts, Copyhold Act, 1894, Inclosure Acts, and other Acts for the year 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.

Copy presented, of Annual Reports of Proceedings under the Diseases of Animals Acts, the Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Acts, etc., for the year 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 3131 and 3132 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PAPER LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

Inquiry into Charities (County of Wilts). Further Return relative thereto [ordered 9th August, 1901; *Mr. Griffith-Boscawen*]; to be printed. [No. 117.]

FLEETS (GREAT BRITAIN AND FOREIGN COUNTRIES).

Return ordered, "showing the fleets of Great Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Italy, United States of America, and Japan, distinguishing: battleships, built and building; cruisers, built and building; coast defence vessels, built and building; torpedo vessels, torpedo boat destroyers, and torpedo boats, built and building."

"Return to show date of launch, displacement, and armaments, reduced to one common scale (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 165, of Session 1903)."—(*Sir Charles Dilke.*)

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS SECURITIES.

Return ordered, " of the amounts of British Government Securities held by the several Government Departments and other Public Offices on the 31st day of March, 1904, specifying whether held in England or Ireland (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 160, of Session 1903) :—

£2½ per Cent Consols.	£2¾ per Cents. (1905).	£2½ per Cents.	Local Loans £3 per Cent. Stock.	£2¾ per Cent. Guaranteed Land Stock.	£2¾ per Cent. War Loan.	Other Securities.		
						Annuities for terms of years.	Exchequer Bonds and Treasury Bills.	Local Loans Bonds.

—(*Mr. Victor Cavendish.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Land Transfer Rules.

Sir HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): To ask Mr. Attorney-General whether, under the Land Transfer Rules, 1903, the registrar is not given practically unlimited discretion to issue certificates of absolute title conferring an immediate Government guarantee of validity in cases where a purchaser has been registered with a possessory title for a period of six years, and whether any fund has been set aside from the receipts of the Land Registry for providing an indemnity; and, if not, or if the same is insufficient, whether the whole indemnity or the deficiency, as the case may be, is payable out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom; and whether such rules have been made with the advice and assistance of the Rule Committee.

(*Answered by Sir Robert Finlay.*) The thirty-sixth of the general rules, under the Land Transfer Act, made on the 18th December last, provides that on application for registration with an absolute title the examination of the title may be modified in such manner as the registrar may think fit, in cases in which the land has been registered with a possessory or qualified title for six years prior to the date of application. I am informed that since the Act came into force about £10,000 a year has been set aside from the receipts of the Land Registry towards the insurance fund, and that it now amounts to £48,449. The 21st Section of the Land Transfer Act, 1897, provides that any deficiency shall be paid out of the Consolidated Fund, but that any sum so paid shall be repaid out of money subsequently standing to the credit of the insurance fund. The rules were made by the Lord Chancellor, and in accordance with Sub-section 2 of Section 22 of the Act of 1897.

Post Office Savings Bank.

Dr. MACNAMARA (Camberwell, N.): To ask the Postmaster-General, with reference to the position of the Post Office Savings Bank when the yearly accounts were made up on 31st December, 1903, if he will state what was the total amount due to depositors; what was the amount of Consols held; at what price were the Consols valued; did the balance sheet show an excess of liabilities over assets; and, if so, what was the amount of that excess.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) The amount due to depositors in the Post Office Savings Bank on 31st December, 1903, was approximately £146,133,500, but the precise figure cannot be given until the end of May. The amount of Consols held on that date was £61,062,221, and the average price of that day at which they were valued was $87\frac{7}{8}$ x. d. On this basis the excess of liabilities over assets were somewhat over

£10,000,000; but, as pointed out by the Select Committee on Savings Banks, a valuation on this basis is misleading, and does not give a correct view of the real position. I need hardly remind the hon. Member that the payment of the lawful claims of depositors is absolutely guaranteed by Parliament, and that they have as security the whole credit of the nation.

Promotions of Civil Service Writers to Abstractor Class in the War Office.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Wexford, N.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will state how many out of the 600 writers promoted to the abstractor class were gazetted to the War Office, and the number of these who actually forfeited £100 gratuity on such promotion; and how many of these established clerks in the War Office have been called upon to accept retirement at the age of 60 years while efficient and with less than forty years of service.

(*Answered by Mr. Victor Cavendish.*) Twenty-seven abstractors have been posted to the War Office. A writer on appointment to an abstractorship became eligible for a pension in lieu of the gratuity for which he was eligible as a writer. Eight of these men would have been eligible for a gratuity of £100 as writers. In reply to the last part of the Question one clerk was so called upon to retire.

Printed Answers—Saving under New Arrangement.

MR. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will state what has been the cost of printing answers to Questions under Standing Order No. 9 during last session, and during the present session, up to the day on which the present form of printing began; and what is the saving anticipated from the present form of printing such answers.

(*Answered by Mr. Victor Cavendish.*) (1) £2,500; (2) £725; (3) From £1,800 to £1,900 for an ordinary full session.

Income-Tax Collection in England and Scotland.

SIR J. STIRLING-MAXWELL (Glasgow, College): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will state what differences in the legal procedure of Scotland and England necessitate differences in the form of the notices for the collection of Income-Tax.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) The main points of difference in the law in England and Scotland respectively which affect this question relate—(a) to the appointment of collectors who in England are, as a rule, appointed by and are the servants of the District Commissioners, but in Scotland are appointed by and are the servants of the Board of Inland Revenue; (b) to the power of enforcing payment:—In England the collectors themselves are empowered to distrain; in Scotland the Sheriff's Officer must be employed to levy distraint.

Sea Police Duties of His Majesty's Ships "Seamew," "Speedwell," and "Cockchafer."

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state whether His Majesty's Ships, "Seamew," "Speedwell," or "Cockchafer," have been engaged on sea police duty during the present year; and, if so, will he say what areas have come within their respective patrol, and the number of days each vessel was engaged at sea.

(*Answered by Mr. A. Graham Murray.*) None of the vessels mentioned have been engaged in sea police duty for the Fishery Board off the coasts of Scotland during the present year.

Tenders for Supplies at Haulbowline.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork Co., E.): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware that large quantities of candles, soap, and other articles are sent almost daily to Haulbowline from England; and whether facilities will be afforded to Irish manufacturers to tender for all such supplies.

(*Answered by Mr. Pretyman.*) Tenders for the articles referred to are invited by public advertisement, and it is open to any manufacturer in the United Kingdom to tender. In order, however, that Irish manufacturers may have full opportunity of doing so, I have arranged for the invitations to tender to be advertised in future in some of the principal Irish newspapers.

Grocery and Drapery Contracts for the Navy at Cork Harbour.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware that grocery contractors to the Navy in the Cork Harbour district now include drapery goods in their supplies; and whether steps will be taken to put a stop to this practice.

(*Answered by Mr. Pretyman.*) As no contracts for groceries for His Majesty's ships at Queenstown are made at the Admiralty, the Question probably has reference to contracts for supplies to the canteens, the responsibility with regard to which rests with the Canteen Committees.

Navy—Pensions and Promotion of Engineer Officers.

MR. KEARLEY (Devonport): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he will state what steps are being taken by the Admiralty to give effect to the promised revision of the scales of pension and retirement in the case of engineer officers; whether acceleration in promotion to the rank of engineer lieutenant is provided for; and whether the pay of engineer commander on promotion will be 24s. a day, as laid down in the First Lord's Memorandum of December, 1902.

(*Answered by Mr. Pretyman.*) I am not aware of any promise having been made that the scales of pension and retirement in the case of engineer officers would be revised. The question, however, has naturally arisen in connection with recent changes; and, after full consideration, it has been decided to make no alterations. Arrangements are already in progress for the acceleration of advancement to the rank of engineer lieutenant. The pay of engineer commanders on promotion is fixed at 24s. a day, and this will apply in all cases as soon as the new arrangements become fully operative. During the period of transition, however, and to meet the difficulty arising from the ages of existing engineer lieutenants, it has been decided to grant the rank of engineer commander before the expiration of the full period qualifying them for the higher pay. Officers who thus obtain earlier promotion in rank will not receive the 24s. a day until they have completed the requisite service.

Horse Breeding—King's Premiums.

MR. LLOYD MORGAN (Carmarthen, W.): To ask the hon. Member for North Huntingdonshire, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether King's premiums are confined to thoroughbred horses only; and whether, for the purpose of improving the breed of shire horses, and for assisting the smaller farmers, he will consider whether the funds appropriated to the Royal Commission on Horse Breeding can be so rearranged as to extend King's premiums to horses of greater utility to farmers than thoroughbreds; and, seeing that South Wales is grouped with seven of the western counties of England, and that only four King's premium horses are relegated to this district, he will consider whether the time has not arrived when some re-arrangement of the districts is desirable.

(*Answered by Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes.*) The King's premiums are confined to thoroughbred stallions, suitable for getting "half-bred horses" of general utility, as recommended by the Royal Commission on Horse Breeding in 1887. It is not considered necessary to alter, at present, the scheme of arrangements.

Opening of Portions of Kew Gardens to the Public.

MR. JOSEPH HOWARD (Middlesex, Tottenham): To ask the hon. Member for North Huntingdonshire, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he will state why the portion of Kew Gardens between the Queen's Cottage and the Old Deer Park, after being thrown open last year, has now again been closed to the public; and whether he will give directions to have the gate thrown open, in accordance with the intention of the Royal gift to the nation.

(*Answered by Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes.*) The grass path through the Queen's Cottage grounds has recently been drained and levelled and the turf has been relaid. The fences are now being repainted. The grounds will be re-opened to the public as soon as possible, probably about the middle of April, if the weather continues favourable.

Registration of Dogs—Free Collars.

Mr. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): To ask the hon. Member for North Huntingdonshire, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he will ascertain the cost of supplying owners of dogs with collars free of charge, and whether the increased revenue which will be obtained from an efficient system of registration would meet such cost.

(*Answered by Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes.*) I do not think it is probable that any such increase of revenue is likely to accrue by reason of the better enforcement of the dog licence duty as would be sufficient to cover the cost of collars, and of any system of registration which might be adopted. As the hon. Member is aware, the proceeds of the dog licence duties are paid over to the various local authorities.

Farmers' Exemption from Dog Tax.

Mr. CATHCART WASON: To ask the hon. Member for North Huntingdonshire, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he will state how it is proposed to enable crofters, farmers, and shepherds resident far distant from any Petty Sessions or Sheriff's Court to obtain the usual exemption from the Dog Tax.

(*Answered by Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes.*) It is proposed that the rules to be made under Section 4 of the Dogs Bill should be so framed as to render personal attendance on the part of applicants for certificates of exemption unnecessary, except in those cases in which the circumstances appear either to the Inland Revenue or to the Court to call for special investigation. In the great majority of cases the necessary information would be obtained without requiring the presence of the applicant.

Vaccination Exemption Certificates.

Mr. CORRIE GRANT (Warwickshire, Rugby): To ask the President of the Local Government Board how many certificates of exemption from vaccination have been granted since the Act of 1898 came into force up to the present time (or up to the date of the latest Return), and whether any of the children so exempted, and, if so, how many, have been attacked by smallpox; and whether any, and, if so, how many, have died from that disease.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) The Returns as to the number of certificates of conscientious objection to vaccination received by the vaccination officers in the year 1903 are not quite complete, but the total number received since the passing of The Vaccination Act, 1898, may be taken as approximately 387,000. By far the largest number were given between the passing of the Act and the end of the year 1898, viz., 203,413. This was due to the fact that certificates could be obtained during the four months after the passing of the Act in respect of all children born prior to that date, whilst in respect of children born after that date the certificate must be obtained within four months from the birth of the child. I have no means of ascertaining how many of the exempted children have been attacked by smallpox, but several such cases have been reported to me.

Regulations for Secondary Schools.

Colonel BOWLES (Middlesex, Enfield): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education if he will explain why Clause VII. has been omitted from the Regulations for Secondary Schools; and whether he will consider the advisability of restoring the procedure under this clause, so that all forms and claims from the schools may pass through the office of the local education authority on their way to the Board of Education, and all grants from the Board may be paid through the local education authority for higher education.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) The old Clause VII. of the Regulations is still retained, though in a somewhat modified form, in Clauses IV. and V. of the Regulations for Secondary Schools. The procedure referred to in the Question does not appear to be in all respects suited to present circumstances, but the matter is receiving the consideration of the Board.

Discarded Constabulary Rifles for Irish Volunteers.

Mr. JOHN O'DONNELL (Mayo, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will consider the advisability of handing over the rifles that are being discarded by the police in Ireland to those tenants who may become peasant proprietors under the Land Act of 1903, with a view to the revival of the Irish Volunteers; and, if so, whether he will take the necessary steps to have the adult population thoroughly trained in the use of arms.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The rifles will be returned to the War Department.

South Pier, Donoghadee Harbour.

Mr. WOOD (Down, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he has been made aware of the state of the south pier of Donoghadee Harbour, county Down, during the past two years; and whether he is aware that it is during the March spring tides that repairs can best be proceeded with; and, if so, will steps immediately be taken to restore the pier.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The repairs to the north pier being of a more urgent character were first taken in hand. These have been completed. The execution of repairs to such works is dependent on weather, not tides, and summer is the best time for working. The repairs to the south pier will, if possible, be completed this year

Supply of Drink to Intoxicated Persons—Limavady Case.

Mr. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that the coroner for the Limavady district held an inquest on the 15th instant into the death of a farmer who, according to the evidence, had been drinking excessively during the day in Limavady, and on returning home was given another supply at a roadside public house; can he state what steps have been taken to prosecute those responsible for giving the drink; and will he cause intructions to be issued that, in cases where it is shown the deceased was under the influence of drink when he came by his death, full inquiries should be made and the offenders prosecuted.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) An inquest was held into the circumstances attending the death of the man in question. There was no evidence whatever adduced at the inquest that the deceased had been drinking to excess. The only evidence given in this connection was to the effect that he had had two drinks on the date mentioned. His death was caused by the upsetting of his cart, under which the body was found. The horse was in the habit of shying. The local police report that the deceased was a sober, steady man.

Belfast Constabulary Barracks.

Mr. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, seeing that the Royal Irish Constabulary barracks in Great Victoria Street, Belfast, were taken over by the Great Northern Railway Company in February, 1903, and that the place now used for barracks is three private houses in bad repair and insanitary and without the necessary accommodation, if he can state how long it is proposed to retain these premises in their present condition, and when new barracks will be built.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) It is not correct to say that the barracks are insanitary and in bad repair. The question of accommodation for the police is under consideration, and until a permanent barrack is secured the premises in question, or other temporary accommodation, must be retained.

Education of Deaf and Dumb Children in Ireland.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin County, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that while in the financial year 1903–4 sums of £34,265 and £3,265 were voted out of Imperial funds in aid of the education and maintenance of deaf and dumb children in England and Scotland respectively, there has been no grant made for a similar purpose in Ireland; and, if so, whether he proposes to rectify the omission in the case of Ireland, and, if necessary for that purpose, to extend to Ireland the provisions of the English and Scotch enactments under which the grants referred to are annually made.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) I am aware of the provision referred to in the first part of the Question. I hope to deal with the matter by legislation at an early date.

Extra Police in Armagh and Sligo.

Mr. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland under what statutory authority was the extra force of police from adjoining counties employed in the county of Armagh, the cost of which is now in dispute; under what authority was the corresponding force, whose cost has been remitted, employed in the county of Sligo; was no claim made upon the county of Sligo for the cost of the police from adjoining counties as distinguished from the Reserve; and, if not, can he explain why this was not done.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The detachments drafted into Armagh are charged for under the 27th Section of the 6 Will. 4, c. 13, and the 6th Section of the 11 and 12 Vic., c. 72. In the case of Sligo, the force in respect in which the claim was made was a force originally ordered from the Reserve, which is constituted under the authority of the 2 and 3 Vic., c. 75, and the 9 and 10 Vic., c. 97. For the reasons, however, explained by me on Thursday last†, the claim in the Sligo case was not legally admissible, and was withdrawn. There was no power so to transform the latter claim as to recover the expenses in the manner applicable in the Armagh case.

Royal Irish Constabulary.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what were the numbers of the Royal Irish Constabulary officers and men in 1880, and the annual expenditure for the maintenance of the force, the numbers and annual expenditure in 1890, in 1900, and in 1903.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The following table gives the desired information:—

Year.	Officers and Men.	Cost.
		£
1880–1881	11,508	1,169,002
1890–1891	12,773	1,424,530
1900–1901	11,191	1,345,511
1902-1903	11,192	1,361,419

Dublin Metropolitan Police.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what were the numbers of the Dublin Metropolitan Police in 1890 and in 1893, and the expenditure in both these years for the maintenance of this force, and from what sources and under what statutory provisions is the money obtained.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The number of police in 1890–1 was 1,220 and the total expenditure was £143,469. In 1893–4 the number was 1,221, and the total expenditure £144,458. The expenditure was defrayed partly from voted moneys and partly from local sources. Receipts from the latter sources were derivable from police tax, pawnbrokers' duty, carriage revenue, fines and fees, police and incidental revenue under the various Acts of Parliament instituting them.

Army Contracts—Drapery and Grocery in the Cork District.

Captain DONELAN: To ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether he is aware that grocery contractors to the troops in the Cork district now include drapery goods in their supplies; and whether steps will be taken to put a stop to this practice.

(*Answered by Mr. Bromley Davenport.*) A very small trade is done in towels, handkerchiefs, braces, web belts, needles, pins, and a few other small articles. It is not proposed to put a stop to the practice, as by it the troops are supplied with good articles at the lowest possible price.

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† See page 610.

Piece Work in Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield.

Colonel BOWLES: To ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office if he will state the number of men employed at the Royal Small Arms Factory at Enfield who have not earned 22s. a week at piece work during the last six weeks; and whether the orders for the machine gun department are likely to be such as will keep the hands employed during the present year.

(*Answered by Mr. Bromley Davenport.*) The number of men generally employed on piece work who have not earned 22s. a week on piece work at Enfield during the past six weeks is 152. The orders for machine guns are very much reduced, and will involve the discharge of about seventy men.

Size and Cost of European Armies.

Mr. LOUGH (Islington, W.): To ask the Secretary of State for War what are the numbers of men in the British, German, Austrian, French, and Italian Regular Armies, in peace and in war, respectively; and the peace Budget of each country.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster.*) (1) Strength (all ranks) of the British, German, Austrian, French, and Italian Regular Armies:—

	Peace.	War.
British (1904–5)	217,000	300,000 about.
[†]German . .	600,000[‡]	3,224,000[‡] ,,
[†]Austrian . .	325,245	2,000,000 ,,
[†]French . .	602,120[‡]	3,200,000[‡] ,,
[†]Italian . .	226,637	1,900,000 ,,

(2) The peace Budget of each of the above-mentioned countries: — British, 1904–5, £28,830,000; German, 1903–4, £31,880,455[§][‖]; Austrian, 1903, £17,493,633; French, 1904, £27,053,196[‖]; Italian, 1903–4, £11,277,556.

Military Regulations as to Wearing of Hair.

Mr. PLATT-HIGGINS (Salford, N.): To ask the Secretary of State for War if his attention has been called to the fact that a private of the 2nd Buffs has been tried by Court-martial at Dover for striking a corporal of the Military Police, in the course of an altercation arising out of the private having worn his curls outside his cap, and whether he will consider the propriety of altering a regulation which tends to make the service unpopular with the rank and file.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster.*) The rules of the service, as regards hair, are the same for officers and men, *i.e.*, the hair is to be kept short, and no alteration in this rule appears advisable. The incident has not been brought to the notice of the Secretary of State; it is one within the purviews of the General Commanding, but if the facts are as stated in the Question, the private has been guilty of insubordination.

British Army in India.

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will state what number of the 227,000 men and officers, now being voted as the established strength of the British Army for the year 1904–5, will be usually stationed in the Indian Empire; what is the estimated proportion that the Indian revenues will thus have to sustain of the whole cost of the British Army; whether the consent of the Government of India has been formally obtained to the maintenance in that country of such troops and to the charge on the Indian revenues consequent thereon during the coming financial year; and whether the despatch recording that consent by the Governor-General in Council, together with any dissents, will be placed before Parliament.

[†] The numbers shown under "War" include all men who have served in the Regular Army, and who could be called upon to rejoin that Army in time of War.

[‡] Exclusive of Colonial troops serving abroad.

[§] The German Estimates make no provision for pensions, which are included in a separate Budget and amount to about £5,000,000 a year.

[‖] Exclusive of cost of Colonial troops serving abroad.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster.*) The numbers quoted do not include troops who would usually be stationed in the Indian Empire, and whose cost falls upon Indian revenues, with the exception of those Native regiments now serving in Somaliland and North China, whose cost is borne by Imperial funds.

Civil Rights of Imported Chinese Labourers on the Rand.

Mr. LOUGH: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies what special conditions exist in the gold-mining industry on the Rand making it right to omit from the Chinese Ordinance the provisions which have been inserted in other Colonial Immigration Ordinances ensuring to its imported labourers direct access to the magistrates' Courts to complain of their wrongs, and giving them special protection against assaults or ill-treatment by their employers.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) In my opinion it is better for the interest of the labourer that he should be represented in the magistrates' Court by his superintendent. If the Chinese desire personal access to the Courts their object may be secured by regulation.

Chinese Labour Ordinance

Mr. LOUGH: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, seeing that the burden cast upon the importers of returning the Chinese immigrants to their country at the termination of their contracts will diminish as the rate of mortality increases among the Chinese, and that in other Colonial Immigration Ordinances there are provisions prohibiting the further employment of imported labourers by those employers in whose service the rate of mortality amongst their labourers is high, a similar provision can be made in the Transvaal Ordinance.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) The hon. Member's suggestion shall be considered.

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Lord Milner has advised that the provisions of the Transvaal Labour Importation Ordinance should be extended so as to apply to Asiatics now resident in the Transvaal; if so, whether Lord Milner has advised that the whole or that certain portions of the Ordinance should be so extended; and whether he will present to the House at an early date any correspondence that has passed on this subject.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) No, Sir, my statement in the House on Thursday was due to a misapprehension of the terms of a telegram which, as I said, was somewhat obscure in its terms. I only had the opportunity of examining it cursorily just before I spoke.

Asiatics in Johannesburg.

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state approximately the number of Asiatics now resident in Johannesburg, and the number resident in the Transvaal as a whole, and how many of these are Chinese.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) Lord Milner informs me that the total number of male Asiatics above the age of sixteen resident in the Transvaal is 9,861, of which 981 are Chinese, the number resident in Johannesburg and district is 6,453, of which 952 are Chinese.

Receipts of Transvaal Railways.

Mr. WHITLEY (Halifax): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if Lord Milner's estimate, in his telegram of 1st February 1904, of the net receipts of the Transvaal railways for the current year as £1,400,000 relates to the same railways the net receipts of which he estimated in May, 1903, at £2,500,000.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) Yes, Sir, they are the same railways.

Transvaal Treasury Receipts.

Mr. WHITLEY: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can explain why the Transvaal Treasury Receipts for the year ending 30th June, 1903, show only £116,316 to have been received on account of the Ten per cent. Profit Tax, while the dividends paid by the gold mines for the same period appear to have exceeded £2,500,000.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) The yield of the tax is affected by the reduction of profits resulting from the mines not running at full strength, and to the amount which falls to be deducted from the profits in respect of the amortisation allowance. I propose to include in financial Papers shortly to be laid a despatch from Lord Milner explaining this.

Chinese Labour Ordinance.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will say what is the distinction, having regard to the official announcement that the King does not disallow the Chinese Labour Importation Ordinance, between the expressions "does not disallow" and the usual expressions "allows" or "sanctions"; whether, having regard to the negative expression indicating that the King does not allow the Ordinance, the Crown still retains the power within a limited time of disallowing the Ordinance; and whether, if such power be exercised, the Ordinance in accordance with the Rules and Regulations printed by the Colonial Office ceases to become operative from the date at which such disallowance is published in the colony.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) The expression that His Majesty will not be advised to disallow an Ordinance, follows the terms of the section in the Ordinance, is in the usual form, and has the same meaning as the expressions allowance or sanction. The hon. Member has already been informed by the First Lord of the Treasury, in reply to a Question on the 16th instant†, that there is no precedent for the Crown, having announced that it does not raise any objection to an Ordinance, reversing that decision.

Powers of Assent to Ordinances of Lord High Commissioner or Governor of Transvaal.

MR. BLACK (Banffshire): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any instructions were issued under the Royal Sign Manual restricting the powers of the Lord High Commissioner or of the Governor of the Transvaal as regards the Ordinances to which he may give his assent; if so, can he state what are the terms of these instructions as regards subjecting persons not of European birth, who are not British subjects, to disabilities or restrictions.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) I have to refer the hon. Member to Clause XXII. of the Instructions to the Governor of the Transvaal, printed at page 14 of [Cd. 1463], and more particularly to the last paragraph of the clause, which states that the Governor may assent to such Ordinances if they contain a clause suspending their operation until the signification of His Majesty's pleasure.

Chinese Labour for the Transvaal—Cost of Transport.

MR. BLACK: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies what is the estimated cost of transporting a man, his wife, and four children under ten years of age from Hong-Kong to Durban, and returning them at the end of the period of service; whether the whole of this cost falls on the importer; and, if so, whether he has considered what prospect there is of an importer engaging men who demand the transport of their wives and families as compared with men who make no such demand.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) I am not prepared to give an estimate of the cost, but it will fall upon the importer. I have caused provision to be made by regulation for facilities for the introduction of the wives and families of labourers, but it must naturally be determined by experience to what extent married labourers are engaged or are accompanied by their wives and families.

Chinese Labour for the Transvaal—Licences for Recruiting.

MR. BLACK: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the agents or recruiters employed to secure labourers in China will require licence as well as the importers themselves; what steps, if any, will be taken to ensure that these recruiters are men of

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxxi., 1265.

British nationality and of good character; and whether they will be adequately penalised if it be found that they are inducing labourers to come from the interior to the port of debarkation through concealment of the nature of the contract, or through misrepresentation or pressure of any kind.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) The official representing the Transvaal Government at the port of embarkation will grant the licence to recruit, and will have to be satisfied that the recruiters are fit and proper persons. He will have the power to cancel the licence, if necessary. Due precautions will be taken to prevent fraud, misrepresentation, and pressure.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Barrack Expenditure in South Africa.

MR. AINSWORTH (Argyllshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War in what places the £3,300,000 for cantonments in South Africa is being spent; and whether, seeing that such expenditure is largely of a permanent character, it is intended to maintain a permanent military force in South Africa.

MR. OSMOND WILLIAMS (Merionethshire): I beg also to ask the Secretary of State for War whether any of the troops in South Africa still live in bell tents, single ply, with five to eight men in a tent; if so, does he propose to remedy this condition of things shortly; have huts been yet erected in any one of the military districts in South Africa; and, if so, will he give the number of military districts with huts, and the number without.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W.): I will reply at the same time to the Question put by the hon. Member for Merionethshire. The sum mentioned is being spent at Pretoria, Middleburg, (Transvaal), Potchefstroom, Standerton, Barberton, Bloemfontein, Harrismith, Middleburg (Cape Colony), and Somerset West. The hutments in most cases are already completed or will be completed by the end of July, but I cannot give exact details. Some of the troops are in circular tents, but these are being steadily replaced by the Indian pattern tents as the latter become available. The accommodation is required for the force now required in South Africa. I am not able to say how long it will be necessary to maintain that force at its present strength.

South African War Honours.

MR. AINSWORTH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War why Lord Kitchener's supplemental list of honours for services in South Africa has not been acted upon; and whether he will take steps to give effect to those recommendations.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: The hon. Member is apparently under some misapprehension. I am not aware that Lord Kitchener has submitted a supplemental list of honours.

War Office Reconstitution Committee.

MR. LAMBERT (Devonshire, South Molton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state what has been the military experience of the three members of the War Office Reconstitution Committee.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: The services rendered to the State by the members of the War Office Reconstitution Committee will be found in any ordinary book of reference. They are too numerous to be recited in answer to a Question. Only one member of the Committee has served in the Army.

MR. LAMBERT: What has been their military experience?

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: That is, of course, confined to the military member.

The Mad Mullah.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Mullah has been informed by General Egerton that only his death or capture will put an end to the operations against him; and, if so, whether this declaration of the General's was authorised and is held to commit His Majesty's Government to an indefinite continuance of the war in Somaliland.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I have no knowledge of any such proclamation having been issued by General Egerton. No such instructions have been sent to him.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, as it was some time since this matter was raised, he will have inquiry made into the truth of the statement.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I am very loth to trouble a general in the field. General Egerton asked for instructions. He has received them, and he is now acting upon them.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: As there is a strong feeling as to the terms of the alleged proclamation, will the right hon. Gentleman be good enough to inquire whether it is true or not?

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I really do not think it is necessary. I will do it if the hon. Member really thinks it necessary.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I do consider it necessary, and I shall refer to the matter on the Army Estimates.

Infantry Recruit Measurements.

Sir CARNE RASCH (Essex, Chelmsford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state the requirements of the War Office as to height and chest measurement for infantry recruits of the Line; and whether such requirements were obtained in the 2nd Battalion Cheshire Regiment, which kept the streets on Tuesday last.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: The minimum height standard for infantry recruits is five feet three inches; the chest measurements are shown in detail in Appendix II. of the Recruiting Regulations. These standards have not been departed from in the case of the Cheshire Regiment.

Lord Northcote and Preferential Tariffs.

Mr. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if instructions were given to Lord Northcote, as Governor of the Australian Commonwealth, to advocate preferential tariffs; and, if not, whether he proposes to take any action, in view of Lord Northcote's recent speech on the subject.

***The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES** (Mr. Lyttelton, Warwick and Leamington): No such instructions were given to Lord Northcote. As I stated on 7th instant†, in reply to the hon. Member for North Cork, I see no reason for taking any action in the matter.

Chinese Labour in the Transvaal—Religious Observances.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether arrangements have been made to provide for the Chinese indentured labourers during their stay in the Transvaal the ministrations of the priests of their religion and the due celebration of the ceremonial rites of that religion; and, if so, what is the nature of these arrangements and on whom will the expense necessary thereto fall; whether arrangements have been made for the proper observance in Chinese temples of the Chinese festivals of the New Year, the Dragon Boat, the Full Moon, or the Winter Solstice which, under the provisions of the Ordinance, are declared to be holidays, and will suitable Chinese temples be erected in the compounds; and whether any, and, if so, what, provision has been made to secure that on the voyage between China and South Africa the Chinese indentured labourers shall have the means of celebrating their religious rites, and at whose expense will their idols be provided.

***Mr. LYTTELTON:** If the hon. Member takes an interest in Chinese ritual—[Mr. Swift MacNeill: I do, great.]—I will endeavour to obtain information for him as to it. In my opinion he may, without anxiety, leave the religious rites of the Chinese to their own administration and their worship to be solemnised after their own fashion.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxxi., 302.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Is this religion to be established and endowed? I want to know who is to pay for this ritual?

***Mr. LYTTELTON**: No arrangement has been made for the payment.

Mr. EUGENE WASON (Clackmannan and Kinross): Will other denominations be allowed these privileges?

***Mr. LYTTELTON**: I have answered the Question several times.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Has the right hon. Gentleman not given an undertaking to this House.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: Order, order! The hon. Member knows from experience that his Question is irregular. He must give notice of any further Question.

Political Mission to Tibet.

Mr. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, if fighting takes place as a consequence of the advance of the Political Mission into Tibet, the Government will recognise the expedition as a military one, and take the necessary steps to secure the consent of both Houses of Parliament, as required by law.

***The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA** (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford): His Majesty's Government will undoubtedly comply with the law as expressed in Sections 54 and 55 of the Act for the better government of India.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork County, N.): Has the consent of the Suzerain Power been obtained?

Mr. LOUGH (Islington, W.): And when shall we have the promised opportunity of debating the matter in this House?

***Mr. BRODRICK**: I do not know that any such promise has been given.

Mr. FLYNN repeated his Question.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: Order, order! That does not arise out of the Question on the Paper.

Papers on Tibet.

Mr. TREVELYAN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether any further Papers are about to be printed in reference to the Political Mission to Tibet.

***Mr. BRODRICK**: No further Papers are about to be printed at present. I may add that all the facts up to the beginning of last month have been given and nothing new or important has occurred since.

Strength and Cost of the Expedition to Tibet.

Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he will state the present strength of the armed force accompanying the Mission in Tibet, the number of coolies and other persons engaged, the cost per week of the Mission, and the number of animals lost by death or otherwise.

***Mr. BRODRICK**: I can add nothing to my reply to the Question of the hon. Member for King's Lynn on the 4th February last† as to the strength of the force accompanying the Mission. I have no further information at present regarding the number of coolies employed, the weekly cost of the Mission, or the losses of animals.

Mr. WEIR: What about the Yaks?

[No answer was returned.]

Progress of the Tibet Expedition.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he will state how many weeks the British armed force in Tibet halted at Tuna, and the cause of the delay; and has the Chinese Government been consulted in regard to the proposed movement north of Tuna, and is it intended to resort to force in the event of the Tibetans offering resistance to the advance of the mission.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxxix., 338.

*Mr. BRODRICK: Colonel Younghusband arrived at Tuna on the 8th January, and has there awaited the collection of adequate supplies for a further advance. The Chinese Minister was informed on the 23rd November that it was impossible that His Majesty's Government should consent to postpone the measures which the conduct of the Tibetans had constrained them to adopt. The British Commissioner will resort to force only in the event of his advance being forcibly resisted, or of his communications being endangered.

Tibet Expedition—The Chinese Amban.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether any information has yet been received of the whereabouts of the new Amban, Imperial Chinese Resident to Lhasa; if so, will he state when he is expected to reach that city; and has any communication been received by Colonel Younghusband from the present Amban or the Tibetan officials accompanying him.

*Mr. BRODRICK: The new Amban is reported to have arrived at Lhasa on the 11th February last. I have not heard that Colonel Younghusband has received any communication from him or from any Tibetan officials who may be accompanying him.

Advance of Expedition in Tibet.

Mr. LOUGH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the armed expedition into Tibet is now about to advance from Tuna to Kalatso; will he state how far the latter place is from the Indian frontier and from Lhasa; and whether, in view of the seriousness of this step, the Government can give facilities for discussing this enterprise in accordance with Section 55 of 21 and 22 Vic. c. 106, which provides that no military expedition shall be undertaken outside the frontier of India without the consent of Parliament.

*Mr. BRODRICK: (1) The Political Mission to Tibet is now about to advance to Kalatso. (2) Kalatso is about 100 miles from the Indian frontier at Rhenok and about 200 miles from Lhasa. (3) As I have already stated in this House, His Majesty's Government do not regard the fact that an escort accompanies the Mission as necessitating any action under Section 55 of the Government of India Act, 21 and 22 Vic. cap. 106.

Tibet Mission—Views of Chinese Government.

Mr. LOUGH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he will state in what terms, and by what document, the concurrence of the Chinese Government was expressed with reference to the British advance into Tibetan territory; whether orders have been given to Colonel Younghusband for a further advance; and what are the instructions in case such advance is resisted by the Tibetans.

*Mr. BRODRICK: In their letter to Mr. Townley, of the 13th July last, the Chinese Government accepted Khambajong in Tibet as the meeting place of the Commission. Further, in his note of the 22nd December, the Chinese Minister suggested Yatung, also in Tibet, as the meeting place. For the reasons stated in Lord Lansdowne's Note to the Chinese Minister, of the 23rd November, His Majesty's Government have been unable to consent to stop the further advance of the Mission into Tibet. Orders have been given for the Mission to advance to Gyangtse. Colonel Younghusband has been instructed to resort to force only in the event of his advance being forcibly resisted, or his communications endangered.

British Trade with Morocco.

Mr. SEYMOUR ORMSBY-GORE (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what is the sum total of British trade with Morocco; what foreign Power enjoys the maximum financial control in the Sultanate; and what steps will be taken by His Majesty's Government to safeguard British commercial interests in that country.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Earl Percy, Kensington, S.): The total value of the trade between this country and Morocco in 1903 was £1,448,509, distributed as follows:—Imports, £559,509; exports of British and Irish produce, £691,336; and exports of foreign and colonial produce, £197,664. No foreign Power exercises financial control in the Sultanate, so far as His Majesty's Government are aware. It would obviously be impossible for me to make any announcement in reply to the latter part of the Question, but in any arrangement which may be come to with regard to Morocco, care will be taken to safeguard British commercial interests in that country.

Shanghai and Nanking Railway.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, having regard to the fact that, under the terms of the agreement signed by the British and Chinese Corporation, Limited, and the Chinese Government on the 9th July last, the Corporation undertook to provide a capital of £3,250,000 for the construction of the Shanghai and Nanking Railway by the 9th instant, and that the requisite loan has not yet been arranged, will he ascertain whether the Chinese Government have assented to an extension of the period during which the money may be found, and the nature of any such extension.

Earl PERCY: We understand that it has been mutually agreed between the Chinese Government and the Corporation to postpone for the time being the issue of the loan in accordance with the terms of the contract which provides for the contingency of an unfavourable condition of the money market in the event of an outbreak of war.

Mr. WEIR: Can the noble Earl give the period of the postponement?

Earl PERCY: No, Sir.

European Claims on Venezuela.

Mr. LAMBERT: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what are the amounts of the claims of Great Britain, Germany, and Italy, respectively, against Venezuela, recognised as preferential by the tribunal of arbitration; also the total amounts of the claims of the three countries, respectively, against Venezuela.

Earl PERCY: The claims in respect of which the three Powers are entitled to preferential treatment under the award of the tribunal of arbitration are as follows: German claims, recognised by the Mixed Commission, amount to 1,673,527 Marks (about £82,848). The British claims already admitted amount to £363,381, while others amounting to £27,168 are still before the umpire. In the case of Italy, claims to the amount of 2,810,255 Bolivares (about £110,206) were admitted by Venezuela. Awards to the amount of £66,238 have been made by the Mixed Commission; and claims to the amount of £1,296,419 are still under its consideration. All the claims of this country outstanding at the date of the Agreement of 13th February, 1903, other than those already settled by Venezuela, were submitted to the Mixed Commission. His Majesty's Government are not aware that either Italy or Germany have any other outstanding claims.

Niu-chwang — Withdrawal of British Warship.

Mr. JOHN CAMPBELL (Armagh, S.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is proposed to withdraw H.M.S. "Espiègle" from Niu-chwang; whether the British Consul has protested against such withdrawal; and whether, considering the position of the British residents in that place, he will give orders that the gunboat shall remain there for their protection.

Earl PERCY: Last month His Majesty's Consul urged the retention of a British man-of-war at Niu-chwang during the war, but, for the reasons stated in my answer of the 16th instant, it was decided after consultation with the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty and on the advice of the Commander-in-Chief on the China Station, that it would not be desirable to retain His Majesty's Ship "Espiègle" at the port. The newly appointed Commander-in-Chief has since been also consulted and has advised that the former decision be adhered to.

Macedonian Gendarmerie Reforms.

Mr. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can say whether the British Ambassador has recently had a prolonged interview with the Grand Vizier in which he urged the immediate acceptance of the scheme for the reform of the Macedonian gendarmerie; if so, what was the date of that interview; and, what reply, if any, has been received from the Government of the Porte.

Earl PERCY: His Majesty's Ambassador had a prolonged interview with the Grand Vizier on the 21st instant, when he urged the immediate acceptance of the scheme without modification. The reply of the Porte to the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Ambassadors' note was received on the 25th, and its general tenor is understood to be of a satisfactory character.

Estate of late Thomas Flynne.

Mr. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether inquiries have been made of the American Consul regarding the estate of the late Thomas Flynne, a British subject, who died in Warwick, Rhode Island, in February, 1902; and, if so, will he state whether a reply has been received.

Earl PERCY: A reply has just been received from His Majesty's Consul-General at New York. The substance of it will be communicated to the hon. Member in an official letter.

Aden and Somali Coast Mails.

Sir MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General what is the present arrangement for carrying on the postal service between Aden and the Somali coast, and the expenditure on that service; whether it is in contemplation to make any alteration in that arrangement; and, if so, what would be the estimated cost thereof.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton): I have no information of recent date as to the arrangements in force for the conveyance of mails between Aden and the Somali coast. To the best of my belief, a local steamship company is employed for the purpose; but the service is not provided by the Imperial Post Office; and I am not in a position to furnish the particulars asked for.

Sir MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE: Cannot the noble Lord give some idea of the estimated cost?

Lord STANLEY: No, Sir.

National Expenditure.

Sir EDGAR VINCENT (Exeter): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will consider the desirability of including in his financial statement for the coming year all expenditure to be incurred, whether provided from revenue or borrowed.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.): It has been the practice of late years to make the inclusion, and I will remember to bear the hon. Member's wish in mind in connection with the next Budget statement.

The Corn Tax.

*Mr. HUNTER CRAIG (Lanarkshire, Govan): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is his intention to re-impose the corn tax of last year.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I must refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Banffshire on 18th February†.

*Mr. HUNTER CRAIG: Do I understand that that still expresses the mind of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the subject?

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I should not have referred the hon. Gentleman to the answer if it did not hold good.

Foreign Money in the London Market.

Mr. ROSE (Cambridgeshire, Newmarket): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can state approximately the amount of foreign money at present employed in the London money market, in sterling bills of exchange, Treasury bills, and the short money market.

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† See. (4) *Debates*, cxxx., 247

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: No, Sir. I have no available data.

Cost of the Whitaker Wright Prosecution.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government, in consenting to pay the costs attendant upon the prosecution of Mr. Whitaker Wright, have considered the outlay incurred by those private gentlemen who compelled the prosecution; and if they will be held free from loss.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY (Mr. VICTOR CAVENDISH, Derbyshire, W.): Perhaps the hon. Member will allow me to answer this Question. The Treasury will pay the costs of the application to the Court for a direction to the Official Receiver to prosecute. They will also pay the net costs incurred by the Official Receiver in respect of the prosecution. As regards the other costs referred to, the Treasury will be prepared to pay them on being satisfied as to the necessity for incurring them and the amount actually expended.

MR. LAMBERT: Do the Treasury propose to pay only the taxed costs or also those between solictor and client?

MR. VICTOR CAVENDISH: I can add nothing to my reply.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: But certain costs were incurred by these gentlemen who forced the prosecution. Are they to bear the loss, or will the Government recoup them?

MR. VICTOR CAVENDISH: I think that is covered by the last paragraph of my answer.

MR. SEYMOUR ORMSBY-GORE: Is the noble Lord aware that the costs incurred by these gentlemen only amounted to half of the estimate?

[No answer was returned.]

Foreign Hops.

DR. HUTCHINSON (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the hon. Member for North Huntingdonshire, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the samples of low-grade hops now being imported from the Continent, sent to the Board by the Hop Growers' Association, have been analysed by their experts, with a view to ascertaining their fitness for the manufacture of beer or porter; and, if so, will he state with what results.

MR. AILWYN FELLOWES (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey): It is not possible for the Board to express any opinion as to whether the hops to which the hon. Member refers are fit for use in the manufacture of beer or porter, and in any case we have no power to prevent their use for the purpose. It did not appear, therefore, that any advantage would be gained by the analysis of the samples sent to us. If, however, the hon. Member considers that there is any reason to believe that the use of the hops in question is detrimental to the public health, perhaps he would communicate with my right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board on the subject.

DR. HUTCHINSON: These hops were brought under the notice of the Board five weeks ago. Was it not the business of the Department to see that they were not sold to the public if they were deleterious to health?

MR. AILWYN FELLOWES: Questions of the public health are within the province of the Local Government Board.

Glanders.

MR. BULL (Hammersmith): I beg to ask the hon. Member for North Huntingdonshire, as representing the Board of Agriculture, whether it is the intention of His Majesty's Government to introduce legislation this session dealing with the prevalence of glanders, having regard to the fact that more horses have been attacked by this disease in the United Kingdom in 1904 than in any one of the preceding twenty years.

MR. AILWYN FELLOWES: It is the case that there has recently been a considerable increase in the prevalence of glanders, and my noble friend, the President of the Board, has for some time past been in communication with the Treasury and the local authorities in London, Glasgow, and elsewhere, as to the steps to be taken to bring about a better condition of things. The difficulty of more effective administration is more one of finance than of further statutory powers.

Devonshire Education Aid Grants.

MR. LAMBERT: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Education what was the total amount of aid grant given to schools in the administrative county of Devon for the latest financial year, and what is the amount of the grant substituted for it in the same area by the Education Act, 1902.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Sir WILLIAM ANSON, Oxford University): The aid grant given to voluntary schools in the administrative county of Devon for the year ending 31st March, 1903, amounted to £6,637 3s. 11d. The aid grant to necessitous School Boards in this area for the School Board financial year ending September 29th, 1902, amounted to £1,028 1s. 1d.; or a total aid grant of £7,665 5s. The new aid grant, which I may remind the hon. Member is not paid on behalf of the individual schools but in aid of the total expenditure of the council on elementary education, will amount to about £25,700 for this area.

The Ladies' Gallery.

MR. JOHN CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for Chorley, as representing the First Commissioner of Works, whether he will consider the advisability of installing an annunciator in the Ladies' Gallery, in order that the occupants thereof may the better be enabled to follow the debates.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): This matter will be considered in connection with the preparation of the Estimates for next year.

MR. JOHN CAMPBELL: How much would it cost?

LORD BALCARRES: I believe the capital outlay is £60, and the annual maintenance charge £40.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): Will the noble Lord consider the desirability of putting annunciators in the public dining and tea rooms?

LORD BALCARRES: Yes, Sir.

Scottish Fishing Industry—Railway Rates.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, having regard to the fact that the fishing industry is hampered owing to the through rates charged for the carriage of fish from the North of Scotland to the southern markets, will he consider the expediency of addressing a circular letter to the various railway companies concerned with a view to secure a reduction in their charges.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. SCOTT DICKSON, Glasgow, Bridgton): I may refer the hon. Member to a similar Question addressed to the Board of Agriculture on 16th March.† I am in communication with the President of the Board on the subject.

Scottish Licensing Act—Early Closing at Dundee.

MR. WILLIAM McKILLOP (Sligo, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been called to the proceedings of the magistrates of Dundee on the 10th March, when they agreed to recommend the licence holders to close their premises on Monday, 11th April next, and also recommended certain rules to be followed with reference to plans of licensed premises lodged with the clerk; whether, in view of the restrictions contained in the recent Scottish Licensing Act, he will, by communication with the magistrates or otherwise, take steps to have such recommendations withdrawn and to prevent similar recommendations being issued in future.

MR. SCOTT DICKSON: My attention has not been called except by the hon.

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† See. (4) *Debates*, cxxxi. 1256.

Member's Question to the proceedings referred to. There is no local authority in Dundee different from that in other places. But as the operation of the Act transferring powers to the new authorities comes into force in Dundee on the second Tuesday of next month, I do not think it advisable in the meantime to take any action in the matter.

Irish Land Purchase.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork County, W.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether, at the sale of a congested estate (under the Land Purchase Act of 1903), an inspection may be dispensed with if the price be within the zones and the estate purchased by the tenants directly from the landlord; and whether the term congested estate includes any estate within a scheduled area.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.): The Questions put to me by the hon. Member are mere abstract questions of law on the construction of a particular section of a particular Statute. They may incidentally come up for decision any day before the proper tribunals and I must respectfully decline to answer them.

Roads and Coonana Boat Slips.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state how much money, including cost of superintendence, has been spent during the past twelve months on the slips at Roads and Coonana, county Kerry, respectively; and can he say whether the works have been completed.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): £359 and £811, respectively. The cost of superintendence, which is not included, is approximately £150. The completion of the works has been delayed by the severity of the weather.

Collection of Irish Land Purchase Annuities.

MR JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what arrangements have been made for the collection from purchasing tenants of the annuities payable under the Land Purchase Act, 1903; whether representations have been made to him from all the Irish banks, calling attention to the unfairness involved if such collection were to be placed in the hands of the Bank of Ireland alone, as leading up to the withdrawal of the business of a section of their customers; whether he has considered the suggestions made by the banks which, if adopted, would obviate the alleged hardship; whether the Government have come to any decision in the matter; and, if so, what is the nature of that decision.

MR. WYNDHAM: This matter has not yet been finally settled.

Irish Fishery Piers.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork County, E.): On behalf of the hon. Member for North Wexford, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he proposes this session to deal with the question of construction and maintenance of fishery piers in non-congested districts in Ireland.

MR. WYNDHAM: The matter is receiving my careful consideration, but I am not in a position at present to make any definite statement.

Dredgers for Irish Ports.

MR. BOLAND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the need of dredgers in many ports of the west coast of Ireland, he will undertake that a suitable one will be provided from the funds available under the Marine Works Act.

MR. WYNDHAM: A dredger, as I pointed out in reply to the hon. Member for South Wexford†, would be of great use for harbours generally. There is no statutory authority for providing a dredger under the Marine Works Act, But this small capital charge for the benefit of the seafaring population who have derived but little advantage from recent legislation might, I suggest, be properly placed on the Development Grant.

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† See page 246.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Does the right hon. Gentleman think one dredger sufficient for the whole country?

Mr. WYNDHAM: Yes, if used continuously.

*Mr. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the matter in some cases is very urgent in consequence of the silting up that is going on and of the commencement of a new fishing season? Would it not be possible to *hire* a dredger from some of the harbour authorities pending final arrangements as to purchase?

Mr. WYNDHAM: I will consider that.

Teaching of the Irish Language.

Mr. BOLAND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Board of National Education has recently stated that where instruction in Irish, as an extra subject, is given in lessons of half an hour's duration on five days per week, not more than two of the attendances made in any week can count in the calculation of the attendance necessary to qualify a pupil for special fees; is he aware that, under this system of calculation, although only 100 attendances at school are required, payment can be refused for a pupil who has made 130 attendances; and whether he will represent to the Board that payment should be made in respect of a pupil who has made the requisite number of attendances at the extra class in which Irish is taught, in cases where Irish is taught on every day, and not merely on two days in the week.

Mr. WYNDHAM: Payment of fees can only be made for pupils who have been in *bonâ fide* attendance throughout the extra course, and *bonâ fide* is defined by the rule as attendance at a day school for 100 days during the school year, and at 75 per cent. of the minimum number of meetings required to constitute a course. The minimum number of meetings in the normal school year of forty-six weeks is forty-six of one hour, or ninety-two of half an hour. The object of the rule is to spread the instruction over the entire school year. It does not disqualify a pupil for special fees whose attendances are more frequent than the prescribed minimum, provided the essential condition of *bonâ fide* attendance is observed. If no such condition were attached to the rule, it would be possible to crowd the attendances into a few months in each year.

Irish Science and Art Grant.

Captain DONELAN: On behalf of the hon. Member for North Wexford, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will lay upon the Table of the House a copy of the circular and memorandum recently issued to the principals of technical schools in Ireland by the Department of Agriculture with reference to the Science and Art Grant.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The memorandum is marked "Confidential" and was issued with the object of eliciting the views of persons of experience, I cannot, therefore, consent to lay it on the Table, but I shall be happy to supply the hon. Baronet with a copy, if he has not already seen the document.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Does the phrase "persons of experience" exclude Members of Parliament? Will they not be able to obtain the circular? Is it not somewhat offensive to say the circular is only intended for persons of experience and that therefore it cannot be laid on the Table?

Mr. WYNDHAM: Apparently the object was to take counsel with persons specially interested in the matter. I will see what can be done to meet the views of the hon. Member.

Owenmore River.

Mr. O'DOWD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has yet received the report of the engineer recently sent to inspect the Owenmore River district, in the county of Sligo; and, if so, will he state the nature of the report and say whether it recommends any scheme for the drainage of that river.

Mr. WYNDHAM: I referred this Question to the Department of Agriculture for report, but have not yet received it. Perhaps the hon. Member will be good enough to repeat the Question to-morrow.

Cork and Fermoy Railway.

Mr. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork County, N.E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, having regard to the fact that the Great Southern and Western Railway Company have not fulfilled their obligation to construct the direct railway between Cork and Fermoy, whether he would urge the promoters of the Iveagh-Pirrie motor car system to establish a service between Cork and Fermoy, *via* White's Cross, Glenville, and Rathcormac, as the interests of the agriculturists in these districts are injuriously affected by the abandonment of the railway project.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The matter is entirely one for the promoters of this scheme of motor traction, but I will communicate the hon. Member's suggestion to them. As I have previously stated, the schemes already taken up are experimental and no fresh schemes will be established until the former have been tested by experience and practical working.

Athenry Special Court.

Mr. DUFFY (Galway, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state if the Press was admitted to the special Court inquiry held at Athenry on the 22nd March and following days; under what statute the Court was held; and if there is any precedent for the action of the police in excluding the friends of the prisoners and the public from the magisterial investigation.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The magisterial inquiry in this case was held on one day only, the 22nd March. Under Section 9, Sub-section 2, of the Petty Sessions Act, 1851, the presiding magistrate in all cases of proceedings for indictable offences is empowered to exclude the public if he considers that the ends of justice will thereby be best answered. The charge against the accused in the present case was an indictable one and the presiding magistrate was of opinion that in the interests of justice the public should not be admitted. This course is not infrequently adopted in the initial stages of proceedings in indictable offences of a serious nature.

Ennis Urban Council—Auditors' Surcharges.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that Messrs. Linnane, Honan, and Clancy of the Ennis Urban Council have been surcharged by the Local Government Board in the sum of £20 in respect of money paid as compensation for the site of artisans' dwellings; and whether, in view of the fact that this money was spent in a useful public work in the interest of the labouring classes, he will, under all the circumstances, see that the sealed Order for the surcharge is re-considered.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The surcharge was made on the ground that the person to whom the money was paid had no legal interest in the land acquired and was not entitled to compensation. The decision conveyed by the Board in the sealed Order is final under Section 63 of the Local Government Act, 1898, and there is no power to re-open the case.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: Seeing that these gentlemen had no knowledge that they were acting illegally, cannot the right hon. Gentleman further inquire into the matter with a view to remitting the surcharge.

Mr. WYNDHAM: I am afraid further inquiry would not alter the fact that the decision is final and the case cannot be re-opened.

Vagrancy in Ireland.

Mr. HUGH LAW: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the inquiry into the question of vagrancy, foreshadowed by the President of the Local Government

Board, in reply to the deputation of the Poor Law Conference on 23rd February, will be extended to Ireland in respect of those points not covered by the terms of reference to the Vice-regal Commission upon Poor Law Reform.

MR. WYNDHAM: I see no objection in principle, and will communicate with my right hon. friend the President of the English Department on the subject.

Development Grant—Trinity College's Share.

MR. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state whether the entire sum of £5,000, set aside for Trinity College from the Development Grant under the Land Act of 1903, has been placed in official hands for the account of the present financial year; if not, what portion has been so allocated; and whether, in the event of immediate owners holding under the college not taking advantage of the Act, will the amount revert to the benefit of the Irish Development Grant.

MR. WYNDHAM: No, Sir; the money has not yet been lodged to the account of the public trustee. Section 39 (3) of the Act provides that the unexpended balances of the yearly grant of £5,000 shall be invested by the public trustee and be available in subsequent years for the purposes indicated by the section, but for no others.

MR. FLYNN: If there are no sales will the money be returned?

MR. WYNDHAM: The money is only available for certain purposes, but if those purposes do not arise then some other step will have to be taken.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: Has there been any sale of Trinity College property up to the present?

MR. WYNDHAM: I have no knowledge.

Horse Breeding in Ireland.

MR. ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the action of the Agricultural Department in selecting a stallion, the property of Andrew G. Elliott, for the benefit of the small farmers in the Portumna and Loughrea district; and, in view of the fact that the farmers interested object to the selection, will he bring the matter under the notice of the Vice-President of the Board of Agriculture, in order that the intention of the Act may not be frustrated.

MR. WYNDHAM: The Department is satisfied that the stallion is suitable for the requirements of the scheme. This thorough-bred horse is not the property of Mr. Elliott, but has been leased to him by the owner, the hon. Member for North Fermanagh.

MR. ROCHE: Have the farmers not refused to take advantage of the selection?

MR. WYNDHAM: I believe some have.

MR. ROCHE: And by my advice.

Irish Poor Law Superannuation Bill.

MR. BLAKE (Longford, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Poor Law Superannuation (Ireland) Bill has been referred to the actuary to whom the former Bill was referred, and who reported the total inadequacy, even on very favourable assumptions, of the proposed local rate to meet the proposed liabilities; whether the actuary has expressed any, and what, opinion as to the adequacy of the finance of the present Bill; whether, if not, he will obtain such opinion; whether he has had any correspondence with the promoters of the Bill, or expressed to them any, and what, opinion on its finance, and as to his attitude towards the Bill; and whether he will consent to a Return of such correspondence.

MR. WYNDHAM: On the 21st of January I informed the promoters that I was unable to suggest any alterations in the draft of the Bill proposed to be introduced this session, which would overcome the objections detailed in the report of the actuary on the Bill of 1901. That Bill differed in no material respect from the draft submitted to me. I also pointed out that the promoters would be well advised to consider the desirability of employing a competent actuary to report to them whether the further measure proposed could not be reconstructed upon a basis which would stand the test of actuarial criticism, and that if this were done they would be in a better position to secure the support of local authorities to their proposals. I am still of opinion that this course should be adopted. I shall be happy to supply the hon. Gentleman with a copy of the correspondence between myself and the promoters. I do not propose at present to lay it on the Table.

Police Infringement of the Licensing Act in Ireland.

MR. NOLAN (Louth, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if any action has been taken by the Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary in the case of a constable belonging to that force, who admitted at Dunleer Petty Sessions on 8th December last that he sent his own child (under age) to a public house for half a gallon of porter in an open vessel; and whether the constable in question is still doing duty in the district.

MR. WYNDHAM: The occurrence took place twelve months ago and the fact was elicited in the cross-examination of the constable, who had overlooked the requirements of a statute which at that time had but recently come into operation. He was cautioned and remains on duty in the district.

Irish School Attendance Regulations.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the promised reduction of the average attendance required in Irish national schools for the first assistant from sixty to fifty will apply to teachers at present in the service but under notice of dismissal or withdrawal of salary, because the yearly average of their schools has not reached sixty, but is not below fifty; and, in the case of new appointments, whether the rule begins with 1st April, 1904.

MR. WYNDHAM: I am in communication with the Commissioners on this subject.

Sale of the Wren and Stokes Estate.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state what is the cause of the delay in the sale of the estate of Wren and Stokes (Record No. 25), in Chancery since 1882; whether the Receiver receives a fixed salary of £200 a year for the management of this estate; whether inquiries will be made as to the management and steps taken to have the estate sold.

MR. WYNDHAM: In March, 1899, the Master of the Rolls made an Order that the estate should be sold in the Land Judge's Court, subject, however, to the further Order of the Court of Chancery in the event of proceedings for sale. Liberty was given to the parties to make such application to the Court as they might be advised, but no such application has since been made.

Irish Science and Art Department—Unexpended Balances.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: On behalf of the hon. Member for North Wexford, I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state what happened to the £58,629 balance unexpended of the £108,174 voted for Ireland in connection with the Science and Art Department from 1890 to 1897, and what the Government propose to do in the matter.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I cannot answer the hon. Baronet's Question as I am unable to trace the figures which he quotes.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: But the right hon. Gentleman is aware of the fact that while certain sums have been voted for education in Ireland in past years very much less has actually been spent. If the figures are incorrect will the right hon. Gentleman inquire and explain what has become of the unexpended balance.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he had hoped that the hon. Baronet who put down the Question but was not in his place to put it would have been able to give him some data. He was quite unable to see how he arrived at the figures given.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: I have no doubt the hon. Baronet will supply the information to the right hon. Gentleman.

Whisky Frauds in Ireland.

Mr. NOLAN: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether a consignment of patent German spirit was some time ago received at an Excise bonded warehouse in Ballina; and, if so, will he state whether the consignees are selling it to the public as Irish whisky.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The Board of Inland Revenue have no information on this subject.

Postal Arrangements in Queen's County.

Mr. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he received a renewed application on behalf of the inhabitants of Raheen, Queen's county, asking, as an instalment of a former request, that at least a post office with one daily delivery should be granted to the locality; and whether, in view of the fact that the district includes the residences of local clergymen, a Roman Catholic church, two schools, and about 300 inhabitants, who are at present deprived of facilities for procuring stamps or posting letters, he will favourably consider the application.

Lord STANLEY: As I have informed the hon. Member in my letter of the 25th instant the cost of the existing postal service to Raheen is very high in proportion to the amount of correspondence, and I regret, therefore, that further facilities would not be warranted.

Mr. DELANY: I beg also to ask the Postmaster-General whether he will give a second daily delivery of letters to the inhabitants of Graigue, Camira, Upper and Lower Forest, Drina, New Mills, and Cloncannon, Mountmellick, Queen's county, as a second delivery has been sanctioned to certain houses in the locality.

Lord STANLEY: I have made inquiry on the question of affording a second daily delivery of letters in the district to which the hon. Member refers, but I regret to find that owing to the small number of letters for the residents, the additional expense which would necessarily be incurred in meeting their wishes would not be justified.

Dublin and Blessington Steam Trams.

Mr. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the loss of life and property caused by the Dublin and Blessington steam tram line since it was started some fifteen years ago, he will order an inquiry to be made into the working and management of the system, including the stability of the permanent way and the condition of the rolling stock.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Gerald Balfour, Leeds, Central): My right hon. friend has asked me to answer this Question. The Board of Trade have power, under the authorising Order in Council, to cause inquiry to be made by one of their officers into the working and maintenance of this line, upon a representation made to them by either of the county councils interested, or by twenty ratepayers of a guaranteeing area, or by either of the county surveyors. If such a representation is received, I will consider the question of ordering an inquiry.

Live Shrapnel Shells at Rathcourseg.

Captain DONELAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether his attention has been called to the verdict of the jury at the coroner's inquest held at Rathcourseg, county Cork, on Monday last, in connection with the death of naval pensioner Daniel Driscoll by the explosion of a live shrapnel shell; whether he is aware that such shells are frequently strewn about the strand at Rathcourseg, and that they are also liable to be hauled up by fishing nets; whether steps will be taken to give effect to the recommendation of the jury with a view to prevent similar accidents in future; and whether compensation will be given to the widow and family of this man.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. PRETYMAN, Suffolk, Woodbridge): Yes, Sir. My attention has been called to this incident, but as there is no suggestion that the Navy have anything to do with the firing of these shells that are found at Rathcourseg in the neighbourhood of two land forts, the matter does not appear to be one for the Admiralty. Practice with naval guns using live shell is only carried out by His Majesty's ships at sea and under conditions which render occurrences of this kind quite impossible.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: Will the hon. Gentleman recommend the War Office to consider the question of compensation?

MR. PRETYMAN: That does not rest with the Admiralty.

The Irish International Exhibition Meeting.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND said he would ask the Chief Secretary a Question of urgent public importance, namely, whether he had any information as to the alleged dispersal by violence of a meeting in Dublin by the police.

MR. WYNDHAM said he had no information, but he would make inquiries in the course of the afternoon.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg, then, to ask leave to move the adjournment of the House to call attention to a definite matter of urgent matter of public importance, namely, the conduct of certain members of the Dublin Metropolitan Police in dispersing by force and violence a peaceful meeting of citizens on Thursday night last.

*MR. SPEAKER: I could not accept that Motion with the prospect of the Third Reading of the Consolidated Fund Bill being taken to-day. The hon. Member can discuss the action of the police on that Bill, and it is a very well known Rule that an hon. Member cannot move the adjournment of the House when there is a debate coming on on which it is open to him to raise the same subject.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Might I ask you, Sir, very respectfully, whether, if the Third Reading of the Consolidated Fund Bill comes on, you will call me?

*MR. SPEAKER: I need not say that I will bear in mind the hon. Member's wishes, but I cannot enter into pledges.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND asked whether, in view of the fact that he might not be called on in the debate on the Consolidated Fund Bill, and as this was a matter involving the right of public meeting, he might not move the adjournment.

*MR. SPEAKER: I think not. The hon. Member's Question was asked after five minutes to three o'clock, and as he stated that it was an urgent matter of public importance, I could not stop him until I had heard what it was. I am clearly of opinion that it was not a matter of urgent public importance, and the Question might have been put on the Paper. I cannot allow the hon. Member to move the adjournment.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND said he had had no opportunity of putting the Question on the Paper. The Rules precluded his getting an answer by the holidays.

*MR. SPEAKER: I have given my decision, and I must abide by it.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND gave notice that he would raise the matter on the Consolidated Fund Bill.

Municipal Trading—Select Committee's Report.

*MR. CHAPMAN (Cheshire, Hyde): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether His Majesty's Government purpose bringing in a measure this session to carry out the recommendations contained in the Report of the Joint Select Committee on Municipal Trading of last session in regard to the audit of the accounts of local authorities.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): In answer to my hon. friend I have to say that the President of the Local Government Board has naturally given very careful consideration to the recommendations of the Joint Committee, but he cannot accept them in their entirety. As regards the particular subject in which my hon. friend is interested—I mean the audit of the borough accounts—he thinks and hopes that with some modifications it might be possible ultimately to adopt the Committee's recommendation. But this is a controversial matter, and I do not think it would be possible to deal with it in the course of the present session.

Cabinet Memoranda.

MR. BLACK: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the late Colonial Secretary the Member for West Birmingham presented to his colleagues in the Government any pamphlet, memorandum or report embodying his views upon South African questions; if so, whether this writing contained any reference to the question of labour for the mines; and whether, in view of the fact that the expense of the right hon. Gentleman's visit was paid out of National funds, the Government will now publish this writing.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not quite sure that I understand the purport of the hon. Gentleman's Question, but I should rather think he is making an inquiry into Cabinet transactions. In that case, I need hardly say, I can give him no answer.

Licensing Law in Scotland.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he is aware that the magistrates of Edinburgh and of Glasgow have exercised their discretion by ordering the public houses in those cities to be closed at ten o'clock; and, if so, does he contemplate any legislation for the purpose of taking away the discretion which they have thus exercised.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am greatly puzzled about this Question. I do not know whether the hon. Baronet has some subtle joke at the root of it; but, as regards the fact to which he refers, it is true that the two town Councils have taken the course which he alludes to. It is also the fact, I need hardly say, that we do not intend to have any legislation on the subject in the course of this session or, so far as I know, in any other session.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON: Is there any intention to compensate these poor publicans?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have no ground for believing that they will be injured.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): I beg to ask whether the First Lord of the Treasury has any further statement to make on the business before the adjournment and the business to be taken first thing after the holidays.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I propose to put down for introduction to-morrow, under the so-called ten minutes rule, the Aliens Bill. Immediately that is over I shall make the Motion for the holidays. I suggest that we rise to-morrow until the Tuesday week following. There is also the Third Reading of the Telephones Bill, which I hope will be regarded as non-controversial, to be taken to-morrow before the dinner hour. There are several private Motions on the Paper for the Evening Sitting. On Tuesday, 12th April, I propose to take the Navy Estimates—Votes 9, 8, and 2. The Supply for Thursday, 14th April, will be Army Estimates. I cannot pledge myself as to the Monday following, as my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer desires to consult me on a matter of business connected with the Budget. I propose, quite early after the reassembling, to introduce the Licensing Bill—in all probability I shall do that on Wednesday, 13th April.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: I hope the original proposal to move the Speaker out of the Chair on the Civil Service Estimates on Monday, 18th

April, will be adhered to. There is an Irish Motion to be moved, and we shall not be able to do this if the Motion to get the Speaker out of the Chair is postponed till the Thursday, as we have a public engagement in Ireland on that day.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. and learned Gentleman shall have definite notice before the House separates of the final arrangements in regard to this matter, and I will take into consideration the arguments he has submitted.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: When will the Budget be introduced?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I should think quite early after Easter, but I do not think I can say the exact date.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee): Will the right hon. Gentleman say why he presses for so early a date for the Shipbuilding Vote, which amounts to something like £17,000,000. We have had six days given to Army Estimates, and the Admiralty is well supplied with money for some weeks to come.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not wedded to the order I have mentioned, and if there is any more convenient course I shall be willing to adopt it. I must remind the House, however, that if I were to put down business in which nobody took any interest on the first day after the holidays we should have to meet a day earlier.

NEW BILLS.

FALSE CHARACTERS BILL.

"For the better prevention of giving False Characters to servants, and of offences connected therewith," presented by Mr. Skewes-Cox; supported by Mr. Bousfield, Mr. Atherley-Jones, Mr. Kimber, and Mr. O'Malley; to be read a second time upon Monday, 18th April, and to be printed. [Bill 142.]

MARKET GARDENERS' COMPENSATION BILL.

"To remove certain doubts as to the meaning of the Market Gardeners' Compensation Act, 1895," presented by Colonel Long; supported by Mr. Raymond Greene, Sir Thomas Esmonde, and Mr. Channing; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 14th April, and to be printed. [Bill 143.]

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Mr. A. Graham Murray, Buteshire), in asking leave to bring in a Bill to amend the laws relating to education in Scotland and for other purposes connected therewith, said, I do not think I need offer any apology to the House for taking one more step forward in regard to Scotch education in what I hope may be a direction consonant with Scotch tradition and Scotch wont. We have in Scotland in the matter of education the most valuable asset which a people can have, and that is, we have a people who are anxious to be educated, and we are, through the developments of the past, singularly free from that religious difficulty which has tended so much to obscure the true cause of education elsewhere. We are all proud of, and many of us look back with a sort of affectionate regret, to the days of the old parish schoolmaster. His success consisted in two things — to a great extent it consisted in his own ability as a teacher; and it consisted also in the fact that in those quiet days he could pick out the best boy and give the best of himself to bring that boy to a stage far above his fellows. Education in his hands did not stop at any particular standard, but it went on as long as the boy was with him and as far as their mutual ability permitted. Accordingly, when we come to modern times, and when we look at the Act of 1872 under which our modern education has been carried on, we shall find that throughout that Act there never is mention in one single sentence of those phrases which are no doubt convenient enough — I mean the phrases primary and secondary education. It is education that is spoken of and education alone. That Act worked into the School Board system the old burgh schools which — using the words as convenient nomenclature — we should properly designate as secondary schools.

Under that Act there has grown up a very natural development of the same idea in the adding to many of the ordinary schools of a higher department. Since the time of the passing of that Act there has grown up a pressing need, which is every day accentuated, of provision for technical education. The Scotch people have, in so far as in them lay, fully recognised that they are anxious to march with the spirit of the time, and accordingly they have given of the Imperial funds which come to Scotland to further in various ways the cause of education. It is not for us Scotchmen to forget that it was in obedience to the Scotch demand that free education in the primary grades, which has now come upon the Imperial Exchequer all over the country, was first conceded. Time and again, when money which has been placed at Scotch disposal under what is known as the Equivalent Grant, a very considerable sum of that money has been given to the cause of education. But the piecemeal development has naturally had its defects. Those defects are principally of two classes. They rather encouraged the tendency of educational institutions to overlap, and, in the distribution of money, between the clamant cries of burghs and counties there has also been the danger—sometimes, I am afraid, not at all unreal—that money for such subjects as technical education has been frittered away because of the very smallness of the contribution to a particular neighbourhood.

Now, I think a consideration of these two defects and of the Scotch idea which I have touched upon, really supplies us with the key of the situation. What you obviously need in a proper educational system is that there should be, first of all, a comprehensive survey of the needs all over a particular district. Facilities within that district should be provided which are suitable to the locality with which you are dealing, you should be able to avoid wasteful overlapping of educational effort, and one authority should control all the different branches of what is truly one education. You must look at the student's career as a whole, and not look upon it as cut up into primary, intermediary, secondary, University, and so on, and you must have adequate local knowledge on your controlling body to thoroughly provide for local needs. If you can carry out a scheme of that sort then it seems to me that you preserve the old Scottish idea of there being no division in the different portions of a career in education, and, at the same time, you adapt it to modern circumstances which make the old situation of parish schoolmasters impossible. Now, if I have carried the House along with me so far, I really think that much that comes after will follow truly as a corolary of that first position. In the first place, it is quite evident that the present system of School Boards in Scotland cannot stand because, excellent as has been the work done by the School Boards in the prosecution of primary education, when you come to secondary education and technical education it is quite certain that the School Board area is necessarily too small.

Now, if the present School Boards are displaced, whom are you to put in their stead? One obvious expedient would be of course to select, as was done in England, the county councils, but there are, after grave consideration, two reasons why I think the county councils should not be adopted in Scotland. In the first place, we have in Scotland what we have not in England, a universal system of School Boards which has worked very well during the time it has been in existence. And, in the second place, the peculiar position of the Scotch burghs makes it very difficult to treat the county council as the education authority. The Scotch burghs' feeling is very strong, I might almost say it is sentimentally strong, but besides that, of course, the Scotch burghs are to a great extent the possessors of the secondary schools, and if you want, as I want, to weave the whole education authority into one, it is quite obvious that you could not take the county council in which the burghs proper—I mean to say the Royal and Parliamentary burghs—are not represented, and make it the educational authority. Upon the whole matter, therefore, I have come to be clearly of opinion that it would not be in consonance with Scotch opinion at this time to take the county council as the education authority. If, therefore, you are not going to do that you will then have to settle what area you will take for your new body. Well, there is a general proposition in regard to area with which I think everyone will agree, that in taking new administrative areas you ought always to take them if possible with the same boundaries as older administrative areas. There is nothing so bad as having various administrative areas with overlapping and intersecting boundaries. You need not, of course, take precisely the same area which for some other purposes of local government has been selected, but at least you ought to take something that is the exact sum of a certain number of smaller areas. Now, in Scotland we seem to have an area suggested and ready at hand, and that is the district area of the county council. It, of course, owed its origin to the County Councils Act of 1889, and it was created, no doubt primarily, merely for the purpose of roads, but it has already been largely used for other administrative purposes, notably, for example, in the matter of public health. It is well understood. The boundaries are well known. It peculiarly lends itself to the treatment of the burghs, and also it is, last but not least, of a very appropriate size—that is to say, that the class of body you would have would be of manageable size, not too big, and not, at the same time, too small. I have said it particularly lends itself to the treatment of the burghs. I would remind the House what I said about the burghs possessing the secondary schools, and I would remind those hon. Members who are not so familiar with Scotch local government, as some of us are, that the police burghs already have representation on the county councils, every police burgh being necessarily a district of the county council. There are, at the same time, certain burghs in Scotland which differ so widely in their circumstances from all others that they obviously demand separate treatment. I mean the great burghs of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, and Aberdeen. Nobody supposes that you could throw them into the counties which surround them, and, accordingly, in the Bill, there is separate treatment for these burghs.

Now, having asked the House to follow me in the way in which, I do not say so much I have come as I have been driven, to the plan which I suggest, because I shall venture to say that the more you look at it you will find it is the inevitable outcome of the general principle I first laid down, I shall now, with what brevity and clearness I can, explain to the House the exact provisions of the Bill. There will be, as I have already indicated, a School Board for each district.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee): Will it be elected ?

MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: I will tell you about the franchise in a moment. The School Board will be elected *ad hoc* if you like, certainly for no other purpose except that of the School Board. The district, as I have already explained, means the district of every county, and all burghs, be they Royal, or Parliamentary, or police, fall into the districts which surround them. As regards police burghs, of course, no further arrangement is necessary, because they all form divisions of the county council, but as regards Royal and Parliamentary burghs they will have to have separate representation—that is to say they will have to elect so many members of the School Board. The only other districts are the four enumerated districts of Edinburgh, which includes Leith; Glasgow, which includes Govan; Dundee, and Aberdeen. These form separate communities by themselves. Of course there are one or two counties not divided into districts at all. In that case the whole county becomes the area, but these are few in number, as hon. Members know. The number of members of which each Board is to consist is to be settled by the Department, which will lay the result of their deliberations on the Table of Parliament. But there will be this check. There must be a minimum of one for each electoral division. I could easily give hon. Members a sort of idea of what the various School Boards would be, but, after the most careful consideration, I came to the conclusion that it was far better—with that proviso that there should be at least one as a minimum—to leave it to the working out of the the Department rather than append it in a schedule to the Bill. It would be very cumbersome, and I think there would be a great deal of most unnecessary cavilling, and, after all, it is only leaving to the Department work which it has been doing without cavil at all, because under the Act of 1872 it had the duty of settling and altering the number of the School Board.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will explain whether it is merely the numbers that are to be left to the Department.

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: As to the number of members, the right hon. Gentleman will see that, so far as the electoral divisions are concerned, I have put in a minimum of one. That almost settles itself. The only case in which you want an arrangement is where you take a Royal burgh in a district. Well, then you must give that Royal burgh so many members in the School Board correlating to its position and authority in the district.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: Is it on the basis of population?

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: Well, I do not think you can go by a hard and fast rule of having regard to population. That is just the class of consideration which will be kept in view by the Department in order to give proper representation to the various districts of a county.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): Will the right hon. Gentleman say what is to be the number of electoral districts. Does he mean the parishes?

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: I mean one member for each electoral division. I think the right hon. Gentleman, although a Scotchman, has not taken much active part in Scotch local government, and he has forgotten that districts of counties are divided into electoral divisions. They do not correspond with the parishes at all and they vary a great deal. That is the reason why one cannot have a cut and dried scheme for making a certain number. For instance, in Mid Lanark there are no fewer than forty electoral divisions, and in one portion of Aberdeenshire—Alford—there are four with quite as large a territory. There are great differences in that way, and accordingly you could not do it by any kind of formula. That would be impossible. At the same time I do not think that the working out of it in practice is at all difficult.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: My point is that the parishes are disregarded.

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: The parishes are disregarded in this matter. The right hon. Gentleman will hear how they come in afterwards. These School Boards are to be the public education authority for all branches of education within their district. They are to be elected upon the county council franchise and, of course, the burgh franchise, which hon. Members know is the same. There are certain transitory provisions to bring the Act into operation, but, after the Act is going, the election will be on the same day as the county council election, and on the same day as the burgh council election, so as to avoid the multiplication of elections. But, of course, as there are many schools scattered up and down a district, and as it is very advisable to maintain that local interest in the schools which has done so much, we propose that each school shall have local managers. These local managers are to consist to the extent of one-third of members of the education body itself—I mean the School Board—and to the extent of two-thirds of persons appointed by the parish council where the school is locally situated. To those local managers are to be delegated such powers as the education authority think fit, but with two exceptions. They are to have nothing to do with, and they are not to have delegated to them, either the appointment or the dismissal of teachers, or the question of borrowing money. There is no part of the Bill to which I have given more careful consideration than the question of the local managers. It would be a great pity if you squandered the amount of local interest which has done so much for the schools in the past. At one time my own feeling was very strongly in favour of putting into the Bill the powers which must be delegated to the local managers, because we cannot help feeling that if local managers are used as no more than mere caretakers of the premises, you cannot get the best men to do that sort of work. There were, however, so many obvious difficulties that I had to abandon that scheme. I only hope that the good sense of the education authority, coupled with the fact that one-third of the managers are to be of their own number, will persuade them to delegate in the most ample manner as is consistent with their own paramount authority. As to the appointment or dismissal of teachers—after all the question of improving the teacher is at the bottom of the question, and anything we can do to improve the condition of the teachers is all to the good, provided only that we do not make our teacher our masters instead of our servants. One of the great difficulties of the past system in regard to the teachers has been not altogether the question of money, but that with these small School Boards the country teacher had no career. One great advantage which I hope will flow from this scheme, if adopted, is that, the educational area being much larger, there will be a chance of a teacher being moved round and round in that educational area. A man will no longer feel that, if he goes to a small country school, he will bury himself; but that he will have from the education authority, at least, certain chances of promotion. It will, also, I hope, to a certain extent, get rid of the occasional —they were only occasional—but sometimes very capricious dismissals of the teachers by a very small body.

The duty of the School Board so constituted will be, first of all, to take a comprehensive survey of the needs of the district and the duties laid upon them in order to make suitable educational provision for the district. There is a power in the Department to bring to book School Boards which do not rise to the full extent of their duty. The correlative powers of the School Boards are very large. They were considerable in the past, and, as a natural development of the system, they had established higher grade departments in many schools. We have never had, what I may naturally call, a Cockerton case in Scotland; but "evil communications corrupt good manners," and last autumn an ingenious parish council in my own county thought it good to start a Cockerton case; and started it. It was successful before the Sheriff Substitute; but the Sheriff Substitute's decision was over-ruled by the Sheriff Principal; and there the case necessarily came to an end. But there were certain *dicta* of learned Judges quoted in that case which caused a certain disquietude in some minds as to whether these higher grade departments, and other provisions of secondary education, were, or were not, legal. It seemed a pity to leave that in doubt, and there are provisions in this Bill which will lay that matter completely at rest. The School Boards are given not only the old powers—because the Act of 1872 and the scheme are not in any way repealed —but a great many extra powers which have been found in practice to be wanted. In particular, they are allowed to help any educational institutions within their boundaries, whether they are managed by themselves or not. There does not seem, according to the Scotch system—which, of course, leaves it to the electors to capture any particular area, and, having captured it, to make such provision as they like for religious education as well as other—there does not seem, and there cannot be, any logical claim by any person not in a School Board for direct aid from the rates. But, at the same time, there is a great deal of proper educational effort which does much for the children of Scotland conducted in schools outside the pale of the School Boards. In particular, the Roman Catholics educate a great many children —if you take the whole of Scotland, although the districts are few. Therefore, I have not shrunk from leaving it to the School Boards, if they choose, to give, under such conditions as they like, help out of the rates to those other educational establishments. There is no compulsion upon them to do so, but I should be very much surprised, on the provision being passed, if, as a matter of fact, you did not find that in centres of large educational matters and enlightened opinion, such as Glasgow, such assistance is not given.

Mr. BLACK (Banffshire): Are the grants to go direct to the schools or to be paid to the School Board?

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: I am not speaking of the grant. I am speaking of the powers of the School Boards.

Mr. THOMAS SHAW (Hawick Burghs): In giving this encouragement to private adventure schools, can that be done under the conditions set forth by the School Boards?

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: Yes. The School Boards in this matter are entirely their own masters, and the Department has nothing to do with it. They need not do it except upon conditions.

There are several other powers dealing with smaller matters. There are outlying districts where shepherds and such people live with their children—and where it is impossible, without ruinous expenditure, to have schools within the reach of these children. I have put in the Bill, for the first time, a power on the part of the School Boards to make such provision, for transit or otherwise, as will bring these outlying children to places where they can get proper education. There is also a power given to start bursaries for the encouragement of promising children who are obviously able to take advantage of being transferred to higher class schools. There are powers also, in the matter of technical education, for School Boards to join together so as to utilise in concert the services of one particular person as a lecturer in response to the need for special education. I see the hon. Member for Leith Burghs present; and I understand from him that that is precisely what has been done in the county of Fife, and it has been found, as a matter of fact, very satisfactory. There are other powers on minor matters—such as furthering the physical development of the children and also securing medical inspection.

*Mr. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): Will medical inspection include dental inspection.

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: Yes, it will.

Mr. JOHN DEWAR (Inverness): What about the feeding?

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: There are some matters connected with the supporting of the children; but the general feeding of the children all round has not been dealt with in the Bill. There is another matter in which I know some people are interested. There is what has been felt to be a peculiar grievance of the school teachers who were alive at the time of the passing of the Teachers' Superannuation Act, in respect that they could not get what they might be expected to get from the School Board, but were forced to take a much smaller pension under the Education Act. That grievance is removed.

Mr. EUGENE WASON (Clackmannan and Kinross): Are ladies to be eligible for election to the School Boards?

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: Oh, yes.

Mr. HALDANE (Haddingtonshire): Are the School Boards to give pensions?

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: Yes, for the future everybody is to be under the General Act.

Now, I pass to the finance proper to the Bill; and by finance I mean, of course, those Imperial contributions which have been made for education. Now, the state of finance is at present really chaotic in its perplexity. It has its origin in the fact that various monies became due by way of Equivalent Grant to Scotland at various intervals. So let me tell the House how the case stands—I do not say "remind," for I do not think that except the hon. Member for Mid Lanark and myself, any hon. Member could say how these various sums come out. Scotland from time to time was given various sums for education. Let me first tell the House how the matter stands at present. First of all there is the Local Taxation Customs and Excise Act of 1890, Section 2, 3b. Under that the sum that comes in is variable, because it depends upon the Customs and Excise. The figures, for instance, for 1900-1-2, were, leaving out the small figures, £87,000, £79,000, and £69,000. That money is the money which is distributed according to valuation and population among thirty-three county councils, eighty-five burghs, and 121 police burghs. They may use it in relief of local rates and apply it to education. The amounts spent on education in the last few years were: 1900, £87,000 available, £62,000 spent on education; 1901, £79,000 available, £56,000 spent; 1902, £69,000 available, £50,000 spent. Now the difference between the amount spent and the amount available does not represent a sort of proper proportion, but it represents the fact that some people have wakened up to their educational duties, and that other people have not. Now I have heard this matter discussed many times, and I do not think that this sort of small margin which goes to the relief of local taxation has any effect; and therefore I propose to take the whole for education. The next source of revenue is under the Education and Local Taxation Account (Scotland) Act, 1892, Section 2, b. 1. That is a fixed sum of £60,000, which has in the past been spent, £4,700 for higher education and leaving certificates, leaving £55,300 to be distributed amongst thirty-three county committees, five borough committees, and one parish committee, making thirty-nine committees in all, on the basis of population, the allocation being according to schemes drawn up by the committees and sanctioned by the Department. The third source is under the Local Taxation Account (Scotland) Act, 1898, Section 2, 4, and that also is a variable sum, though it has not varied very much, having been for the last five or six years about £37,000 or £38,000. Of this £2,000 is available for higher inspection and leaving certificate examinations, £2,000 for agricultural education, a certain sum is reserved for grants to central institutions, £13,000 having been paid under this head, and grants to higher class schools, averaging about £25,000. That exhausts what I may call the present sources of supply. The House will remember that a certain amount was distributed directly, but a larger amount was distributed under the minutes of the Department, the allocation at the same time being among the various county councils and borough committees. But besides that there is another fund under the Education and Local Taxation Account (Scotland) Act, 1892, Section 2 (5). There is £100,000 which is paid to county councils, boroughs, and police boroughs, and that can go under the law either to the relief of rates or towards schemes of public utility under which is included educational schemes. Very little of that money has, in fact, been paid to education, viz., only £547. Taking what I hope is to be an absolutely comprehensive system, and looking to the flagrant necessity of the nation for real effort in the matter of technical education, I do not think it is too much to ask the country people to make some sacrifice, and I have come to the conclusion we can do all we want to do without imposing any new rate whatever, but I shall ask the House to let me lay violent hands upon this £100,000. What I propose to do is this. I propose to take all these sums I have enumerated and to pool the whole of them into a new fund which shall be called the Education (Scotland) Fund; that is to say, instead of dividing them piecemeal as they have hitherto been divided, I propose to pool the whole money into one fund. I have left out one very great source of supply which I had forgotten for the moment, and which, of course, is the aid grant of last year, viz., the money we are entitled to in respect of the Imperial contribution to England, £219,000.

I propose to pool the whole of these monies, and now I shall read to the House the provisions of the clauses by which these monies are to be paid out. First of all, there is the cost of inspection of higher schools as recognised by the Department, of leaving certificate examinations, and the cost of inspection, which, of course, has been found to work admirably. Secondly, the money will go to establish and maintain a central fund from which the Department shall, as it sees fit, make grants in aid of capital expenditure incurred by local committees, bodies, or managers in providing new institutions for the promotion of technical education of an advanced character, and for extending such institutions where they already exist, providing the total amount in any one year shall not exceed the sum of £40,000. I think that carries out what has been greatly recognised as desirable. Thirdly, it will go to making special grants, according to rules and under conditions prescribed from time to time in the minutes of the Department; first, in aid of such educational institutions as may be expressly recognised by the Department; secondly, in the provision of higher education whether the schools in which such education is given are eligible for the annual Parliamentary grant or not; and thirdly, in aid of any expenditure incurred by School Boards in establishing bursaries or bringing education within the reach of children in outlying districts. Fourthly, it will go in aid of, or for the provision of, qualified teachers for schools eligible for the Parliamentary grant. Fifthly, it will go in aid of general expenditure incurred by School Boards by paying some 1½d. per scholar for every complete 2d. by which the amount of the equivalent grant falls short of 2s. per head. One of the Acts which we have had to repeal is the old necessitous School Board Act, because if we did not repeal that Act in the larger areas of the School Board we should not have got our money out of the Treasury, which, of course, was part of the settlement when we got the aid grant last year. When we got the aid grant we were rather in this difficult position. In England the old Acts, the necessitous School Boards, and the necessitous Voluntary School Acts were swept away and then the new Act came in the place of them; in Scotland those remained. If we had retained the old necessitous School Boards in these larger districts, of course the Treasury would not have had to pay. Therefore, with the assent of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I compounded for a sum of £60,000. Well, that has to go back again, of course, to the School Boards to help them where they are largely necessitous. I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer met me perfectly fairly. It is quite impossible to leave the matter as it is, and I am not going to cavil about a thousand or so up or down. After all these purposes, which hon. Members will see correspond practically to the old destination of the money for secondary purposes, of course amplified by these provisions for helping central institutions and for making a nucleus fund for the establishment of new institutions, there remains to distribute a sum which is approximately as nearly as possible the whole balance of the said funds for technical education, and School Boards, and managers of schools not under the charter of the School Boards, in proportion to the average attendance of scholars. That, of course, is just the same as the balance section of the minute which distributed the aid grant last year; that is to say, it gives practically the balance to all the State-aided schools, whether Board schools or not. That ends what I have to explain on finance. In a word it simply comes to this: I take all the old sources of money, and I take in one sense two new ones. I cut out the option which the town councils and county councils have of putting aside a certain amount of the fund under the Local Taxation Act of 1890 for the relief of rates and put it all to education; and I lay violent hands also on the £100,000. By doing that I believe I can make all these great educational reforms without recourse to any new special rate.

Now that ends in one sense the administrative portion of the provisions of the Bill with one exception. There has been, from time to time, mooted in discussion proposals to transfer the Education Department itself from London to Scotland. After very careful consideration I am of opinion that you could not make a greater mistake. I believe that so long as you have an Imperial Parliament in which you have the Minister for Scotland here, it is absolutely necessary that he should be in continual touch with his Education Department, and I am perfectly certain he could not be if that Department were in Scotland. Therefore I should be root and branch opposed to any such proposition. But at the same time I recognise that the feeling which has mooted that proposition is quite a fair feeling. Hon. Members feel that under the present system there is perhaps scarcely that outlet for

Scottish opinion to have its proper effect and weight upon Departmental attitude, and they would, so to speak, rather like to have the opportunity of putting their views before the Department rather than learning for the first time by circulated minute what those views are. I may say that in former years hon. Members have often somewhat complained of the number of circulars on Scottish education. I have had compiled, and hope shortly to publish and circulate, a selection of the circulars which show the operative progress during the last few years, and prefixed to that as it were an explanatory memorandum showing as one continuous whole the general scheme and the progress which the Department has made. In order to fulfil a distinct wish I propose in the Bill to constitute four provincial councils. These provincial councils are to be constituted by Order in Council and they are to meet at Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Inverness. They are to represent the views of various bodies interested in higher education, including each of the four Scottish Universities, and in determining their constitution special regard is to be had to the following special provisions. Each provincial council shall consist to the extent of not less than one-half of its members of persons representing county councils, School Boards, and other local authorities within their province; to the extent of not more than one-fourth of its members of persons elected by the *Senatus Academicus* of one or more of the four Scotch Universities, and they are also to contain representatives of central institutions other than Universities, of the governing bodies of schools not under the charge of School Boards, and also two or more persons actively engaged in teaching in schools, whether under the charge of the School Board or not, situated in its province. The function of those councils is to deal with any matters referred to them by the Department, particularly with the adequacy or inadequacy of the provision made for the higher education of the population within any district, the admission or exclusion of institutions or schools to or from participation in the Education Fund, the qualification of the teachers to be employed in the institutions, and the curriculum of any individual school; but they are to have an absolute power in their own hands of making a representation to the Department with reference to any matter affecting the educational interests of the province. I hope that by this method we shall enlist in the cause of education all that is best of Scottish authority for the purpose of helping in the deliberations of the Department. I should be absolutely opposed to the provision of paid places for any such work as this. But, on the other hand, I think it of the greatest importance that we should get the Universities to take their part in the work of directing general Scottish education, and under this scheme we shall be able to do so. It is obvious, I think, that you could not simply divide Scotland into four, and assign each part to a University. It would be a fantastic arrangement to assign the Highlands to St. Andrews alone; therefore there would probably be representation of two Universities at least upon each of these councils.

Mr. BRYCE asked how the four great School Boards would be affected.

Captain SINCLAIR (Forfar) asked whether Dundee would go with Aberdeen or with Edinburgh.

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: Do not let us get at cross purposes. The provincial councils and the four great School Boards are totally different things. As far as the provincial councils are concerned, they are Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Inverness. They do not go by the cities at all, they are districts or provinces, Inverness being the Highlands, Aberdeen the north-east, and Glasgow and Edinburgh the south-east and west. As far as Dundee is concerned——

Captain SINCLAIR: It goes with Aberdeen?

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: No, it does not go particularly with Aberdeen.

Captain SINCLAIR: With which province does it go? It must go with one or the other.

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: The actual provinces are not settled in the Bill. That has to be done by Order in Council. All that is indicated by the Bill are the heads of the provinces. I do not know whether Dundee would go with Edinburgh or with Aberdeen; it is not determined. If the Government had attempted to go into such minutiæ it would have meant drafting another Bill upon this Bill. As to the enumerated districts, Edinburgh consists of Edinburgh and Leith; Glasgow consists of Glasgow, Govan, and Partick; Dundee consists of the burgh of Dundee; and Aberdeen consists of the burgh of Aberdeen. All that I have said about School Boards in general is applicable to their position.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: All I desire to know is whether the School Boards in the four great cities are to be the sole education authorities, and have sole financial control of education in those cities.

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: Absolutely. There is only one slight difference between their position and that of the School Boards of the other districts. In other districts it is compulsory upon the School Board to appoint local managers, whereas in these large burghs it is not; we are leaving them precisely as they were before. Except for that, financially and in every other way, they are in precisely the same position as the other School Boards.

I have explained the provisions of the Bill at some length, and I trust I have not left any uncertain feeling in the minds of hon. Members as to what those provisions really are. I venture, not without hope, to make an appeal to the House in this matter. I am the first to confess that anxiety for the furtherance of the best interests of education in our country is as strong with the Party opposite as with hon. Members behind me. At the opening of the session the right hon. Gentleman opposite made some kindly references to myself in connection with this subject. I venture to think that when he has studied the Bill he will find that I have not played him false. If this Bill is passed and the House will consent to the small sacrifice in the matter of money to which I have referred, it will be quite possible, with the resources which the Imperial Parliament with no stinting hand has placed at our disposal, to have what I hope will be the best educational system to be found in the United Kingdom.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I desire to congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on the manner in which he has introduced this Bill. He has discharged his task with a degree of modesty which does him credit, because this is a large measure, but he has not wasted rhetoric upon it. He has told a plain story such as his countrymen like to hear. There will be a general feeling of relief that the right hon. Gentleman has succeeded in avoiding some of the difficulties which have beset educational legislation affecting the lower end of the island—I mean it is lower on the map—with which we have had to deal during the last two or three years. He has steered between Scylla and Charybdis, but there may still be little rocks and whirlpools with which he may find himself in difficulties. This question opens up a large field. As the Scotchman said of the pigeon-pie, there is a good deal of confused feeling about the Bill, and there may occasionally be a morsel to which his countrymen may exhibit a reluctance, but in the main, the right hon. Gentleman has maintained that which the Scotch people value—viz., the control of their own schools. He has not advanced any artificial or new-fangled plans for bringing in superior wisdom to guide the common sense of the Scotch people at large, and he has shown no indication of favouritism or partiality in the manner in which he has dealt with the subject. It would not be desirable for any of us to commit ourselves too deeply on the subject until we and the Scotch people have had an opportunity of reading and studying the Bill. It is a fortunate thing that the Bill should be published now, so that a full opportunity for such examination may be given.

The only matter to which the right hon. Gentleman referred upon which I look with a certain amount of doubt suspicion might be too strong a word—doubt as to whether it will stand the ordeal of close investigation—is the establishment of the consultative provincial bodies. He mentioned, as if it were something to be satisfied with—and so it is—that he did not propose to pay salaries to persons taking part in that portion of the scheme. But, after all, you are left with the old dilemma. If a person is paid he has some responsibility; if he is not paid he has none. So that, however reluctant you may be to pay people, you do not get the full sense of responsibility or control unless you do pay them. I rather suspect the value of the amateur interference of so-called experts in educational matters, even when they come from Universities. I do not know what position the Universities are to occupy. We are co-ordinating, correlating, and doing everything else that is desirable nowadays in education. The Universities have always been democratic bodies, closely mixed up with the life of the people, and I do not know exactly what the relation will be to the secondary and primary schools. I hope this is not a profane suggestion to make. If there is advantage in the presence of representatives of the Universities, with consultative powers, if no more, on authorities dealing with the general education of the county, must it not also be desirable that plain men, with large experience of School Boards and other humble departments of the educational system, should be admitted to some voice in the governing bodies of the Universities themselves? I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman and the Government on having introduced this Bill. As I have said, I think that in the main it carries out the ideas of the Scotch people on the subject. As a representative of a burgh, I am not sure that the right hon. Gentleman has dealt with the burghs with the respect that he ought to have shown to them, but that is a matter of detail to be dealt with when we come to the clauses of the Bill. In the meantime I think there will be a general feeling that the old system of local education, governed by the locality, under the control of the inhabitants and the parents of the children, to which they have been accustomed for so many years, will not be materially injured, while other advantages which are at present absent will have been secured.

Mr. EUGENE WASON asked on what date the Bill would come into force.

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY said the appointed day was 15th May, 1905.

***Mr. WEIR** (Ross and Cromarty), while thanking the right hon. Gentleman for the Bill, which he was glad to find extended the School Board franchise to all persons having the right to vote for county councillors, suggested that provision should be made by which School Board managers in sparsely populated districts might be paid travelling expenses for attending School Board meetings and specially meetings of the provincial councils. He did not think a provincial council would be suitable to the Highland counties. He would wait to see the Bill before making any further remarks.

Sir ROBERT REID (Dumfries Burghs) asked whether the powers delegated to the local managers were to be exercised subject to control by the School Board, or at the discretion of the managers.

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY said that that would depend on the terms of delegation.

Mr. BRYCE congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on the boldness with which he had dealt with the chaos and confusion caused in the Scotch education system by the different grants. If the Bill dealt with no other matter than that they would have cause to be grateful for it. He desired to take the opportunity of paying a tribute not only to the right hon. Gentleman himself, but also to the late Secretary for Scotland for his endeavours to improve the whole system of Scotch education. Scotland had never had a better Secretary than Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and there was no subject to which he devoted himself with greater assiduity than the promotion of Scotch education, and in the Bill many points which would have the general assent of the Scotch people could be recognised as having been pressed by Lord Balfour of Burleigh in speeches and circulars. There was doubtless an advantage in giving Scotch educational opinion an opportunity of expressing itself, but it was doubtful whether that opportunity would be as well given by four provincial councils as by one central council for the whole of Scotland. In some parts of the country, partly in the North, it would be very difficult to get people of large educational experience, such as it was desirable to have in relation with the knowledge of the practical difficulties of each district. General educational experience, together with knowledge of the special needs of the districts, was necessary, and he was not sure that that would be obtained with the four councils so well as by one. The difficulty of bringing people from a distance might be surmounted by giving the council power to meet in different places. While sympathising with the view of the right hon. Gentleman that it was better to appropriate the four existing sources of revenue than to have recourse to the rates, he suggested that there might be cases in which a burgh or an advanced and enlightened county might with advantage have the power of rating itself in addition to receiving money from this separate Scotch fund. There were many minor points to which attention would have to be paid when the House had the Bill in print, meanwhile he expressed his pleasure that the fundamental principles of local representation and full local control—which had given such vitality to Scotch education in the past—were to be preserved.

*Mr. MACONOCHIE (Aberdeenshire, E.) asked the Question whether nothing could be done to assist farm servants in the matter of extra cost to them for school books for their children, owing to the fact that nearly every parish had different books. Also whether there was provision to enable the children of agricultural labourers to leave school before fourteen years of age when they had passed fairly high in their examinations.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs) said that the provisions of the Bill as explained by the Secretary for Scotland were a considerable improvement upon those of the Education Acts hitherto produced by the present Government, and he wondered whether the right hon. Gentlemen could see his way to extend the Bill to Wales. One provision of the Bill was a striking comment upon a certain action taken by the Government in this country. He understood that under this Bill the treatment of voluntary schools in Scotland was to be different from that of the voluntary schools in England and Wales, as an option to the giving of rate aid was to be left to the local authorities. When the people of England and Wales claimed to exercise a similar right they were told they would have to go to gaol. Why should Scotchmen be allowed perfect freedom in this matter, while people south of the Tweed were threatened with imprisonment for claiming the same right. A great deal was heard about equal rights for all white men in Africa, but he thought it was about time there were equal rights for all white men in this country. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would make representations to the Government so that they might realise that people south of the Tweed were as fond of freedom and fair play as those who dwelt north of it.

Mr. HALDANE said it was clear from the last speech that this Bill avoided the religious controversy which had been such a great obstacle to educational progress in England. In Scotland they had always been to a large extent free from that trouble, because, although they had denominationalism, with them it was well understood, and kept within limits by popular sense and popular control. He believed there were certain powers in the Education Department of giving grants in aid of voluntary schools. Would those powers still continue?

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY said he was not aware of the powers to which the right hon. Gentleman referred.

Mr. HALDANE said he was thinking of one or two particular cases, but it was evident from the right hon. Gentleman's reply that the matter did not bulk largely in his scheme, and therefore it was of no importance. A further question was whether the management of the religious question would rest with the popularly-elected authorities constituted by this Bill.

Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: Absolutely.

Mr. HALDANE thought the right hon. Gentleman was right in preserving a certain amount of local management, but it would require careful watching, as in some parts of Scotland there had been a disposition to make the holidays coincide with agricultural rather than educational requirements. The Government were to be congratulated on having solved in a satisfactory fashion the difficulty about the teachers. There was to be a large area, with a large number of responsible people upon the authority which would have the power of appointment and dismissal, and he did not think teachers would ask for more. The part of the scheme which he thought the least satisfactory was the position of the Scotch Education Department. It was, doubtless, a great convenience to Ministers and Members of Parliament to have the Education Department in London, but the difficulty of access was keenly felt by local managers and people interested in education generally in Scotland. The Department was too far away, and matters were conducted far too much by letter and circular and far too little by consultation. He hoped it would be part of the administrative scheme of the right hon. Gentleman, outside this Bill, to ensure that the representatives of the Department in Scotland were more open to consultation. The proposal with regard to four provincial councils would cut both ways. It was a good scheme in one direction and it would act as a bulwark against bringing the education authority to one particular centre in Scotland. He agreed with his right hon. friend that in the long run it would entail a change in the constitution of the governing bodies at the Scotch Universities. Those bodies at present were not satisfactory; they were out of touch with the popular element, with the result that there was a want of that vitality which could be seen in the governing bodies of the new Universities in England, such as at Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham. He hoped the Bill would be the first step towards bringing not only the University influence into the general system of education, but also the general educational influence into the University system. With regard to technical education, that branch of the subject could not be developed on an adequate scale so long as it was kept to the mere provision of technology. Technical instruction must be based on a foundation of general knowledge, and kept up in relation to higher learning, and he had always thought they suffered from the fact that the Universities did not take a sufficient part in primary education. These provincial councils might be the means of introducing the Universities into a new sphere of activity for which they ought to be well fitted. The right hon. Gentleman was to be congratulated on having hit off the general sense of the people of Scotland in this matter. In Scotland, undoubtedly, with the experience the people had had of administration of education and their long habituation to directly-elected authorities, the right hon. Gentleman had taken a wise course and the only one consonant with Scottish opinion. With regard to details of the scheme, Members would have to wait for the Bill before pronouncing a final opinion, but the right hon. Gentleman was to be congratulated on the general foundation which appeared to be embodied in the measure.

Mr. THOMAS SHAW desired to associate himself with the remarks of his right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition, both as to the measure itself and as to its introduction. The right hon. Gentleman had rendered many signal services to the State, but he had never rendered a greater than in the construction and introduction of this Bill. While reserving to himself the right of criticising the details of the measure, there were one or two points to which he wished now to refer. He had frequently argued for the triangulation of Scotland for the purpose of managing the educational wants of the country, and he freely admitted that this scheme seemed substantially to have accomplished that object. He hoped that nothing he would say would be construed as anything but a tribute to the School Board system of Scotland from which that country had derived such signal benefit for thirty-two years. The principle of that Act had been of great importance and benefit to education in Scotland. The principle was, in the first place, that there should be perfect control over the contribution of the rates of the locality, and secondly, that with that control there should be absolute liberty of administration even on the difficult topic of religion. On these two lines there had been produced in Scotland a state of educational peace which was in marked contrast, in recent years, to what had been seen south of the Tweed. While he felt a pang of regret at the abolition by the Act, at one stroke, of the School Boards of Scotland he found consolation when he discovered the constitution of a local committee. Might he point out to his right hon. friend the Secretary for Scotland that there would be, on the question of area, not inconsiderable difficulty in some parts of Scotland. There were no district councils in some counties. He had not the statistics before him at the present moment, but his impression was that the large county of Sutherland had no district council at all. The whole of that county would be administered by one board, and it stood to reason that no poor man would be called to sit upon it. He thought the county of Caithness was in a similar position. These were cases which would have to be considered in the spirit in which the Bill had been introduced, and he was quite sure that the Government would consider any workable suggestion as to these details. In regard to the School Boards he ventured to interpose one question. He understood that the School Boards for the areas would have the power of overlooking the question of the educational wants in their districts, including the supply from voluntary sources. He hoped that his interposition would not be misunderstood. He was glad to hear that before grants were made to these voluntary institutions, conditions laid down by the representative body must be complied with. This was an arrangement which appeared to solve a troublesome and knotty question in regard to the voluntary schools. So much difficulty had arisen in England on the questions of public control, the state of buildings, and the efficiency of the staff that he had heard with satisfaction that this money was to be administered by means of a representative body, making conditions which in their judgment would be adequate to secure effective public control. He also welcomed the financial provision made for bringing pupils to secondary and technical centres, and for bursaries to be given to promising pupils.

He was extremely sorry that he could not give a complete eulogy to this measure. He should be inclined to hold that the scheme for four provincial councils was unfortunate, and at present he would hope that it was not necessary for the scheme of the Bill. He rather differed from his hon. and learned friend the Member for Haddington, who talked about the Universities and their connection with technical and secondary education. His speech appeared to him rather a plea for the reform of the Universities in these respects, but it was no argument for taking selected bodies from the Universities and planting them in the position even of consultation in regard to the primary or secondary education of Scotland. He would advise his friends on both sides of the House to look carefully to what were to be the functions of these bodies. If he gathered aright they were to form one-fourth of the governing bodies of the voluntary schools. What possible right had they in the matter of consultation or otherwise in a scheme of this kind? On the whole the four provincial councils seemed altogether to be surplusage. He hoped they were not necessary to the Bill, but he would rather take them than do anything to impede the progress of the measure. The spirit in which the Bill had been introduced augured for it a happy, and, he hoped, a swift progress. It behoved all in Scotland to give every possible assistance to the passing of the Bill.

*SIR FRANCIS POWELL (Wigan) said he desired to congratulate the Scotch representatives on the policy of the Government in simplifying, and therefore giving greater force to, the use of the Consolidated Fund in the interests of education. Some persons in England had long thought that it would be of great benefit to education if a larger share of what he would venture to call a national grant came from the Consolidated Fund rather than from the rates.

That would simplify procedure, avoid many complications, and much strife. He and many others believed that the salaries of teachers should be charged on the national funds, thereby placing that distinguished body of men in a more satisfactory position than they now occupied. He desired to thank his right hon. friend the Member for Haddington for what he said in favour of general as well as technical education. One of the great mistakes made in this country during the last ten or fifteen years had been that too exclusive attention had been given to purely technical education. That was, perhaps, a necessity of the time; but he sincerely hoped that now the literary side of secondary education would find its due and becoming place in the education of the country.

*Mr. J. A. CAMPBELL (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) congratulated the Secretary for Scotland upon the manner in which the Bill had been received. This was not the time for going into details, but there was one provision in the Bill on which he thought his right hon. friend deserved especially to be congratulated. A frequent complaint against the present condition of things referred to the smallness of the School Board area in many country districts.

It was felt that the smaller areas restricted the scope of the School Boards, and these were apt to take narrow views of what was necessary in the interest of education. His right hon. friend had shown how the larger areas would be greatly in favour of the teachers, and there was no doubt that the change would open up a prospect of advancement to the teachers of the country schools. That would have the effect, we might hope, of attracting a fuller supply of male candidates for scholastic situations. At present there was much complaint of a deficiency in the supply of properly qualified male teachers. On the other hand, with larger areas, there was a danger of the people of a parish losing some degree of their interest in the education of their children. Under the present system it was found that the connection of the people with the school of the parish had a great effect in stimulating their interest in education, and if, in the future, the parish was simply to be part of a large School Board area without much individuality of its own as regards school administration, there might be a falling away of that interest. His right hon. and learned friend had avoided that danger by his provision of managing committees, through which the interest of each parish in its own schools would be maintained, while the larger area would give greater scope to education, and afford a better field for the teachers. He had to acknowledge the position which the right hon. Gentleman gave to the universities of Scotland in granting them a voice in the proposed consultative committees. Some allusion had been made to the governing bodies of the universities, as if they might not be sympathetic in the matter, but he would remind the House that not long ago the constitution of these governing bodies had been largely altered, and that now no fear of that kind could be entertained. He congratulated his right hon. and learned friend on the Bill he had explained to the House and on the favourable reception which it had met with on all sides.

*Mr. CATHCART WASON said he was very glad to understand from the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland that, under the Bill, it would be possible to do away with some of the disabilities which some teachers in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland suffered through being unable to come under the provisions of the Superannuation Act. He was pleased to join in the general satisfaction with which the Bill had been received in all parts of the House; more especially in connection with the manner in which the grievances under which the old teachers had suffered for a long time had been treated. Another point with which he was delighted was the provision for the conveyance of children to school from remote districts, instead of their having to walk to school on cold, wet days. Many children were blamed for stupidity in school when they were actually suffering from toothache and earache. If more attention were paid to the physical condition of the poor children and if their health were better looked after, there would not be the same outcry as at present for technical education. The

Scottish children had plenty of brains if they had only health; and if facilities were provided against their sitting in school with wet feet and wet clothes. He was disappointed at not having heard from the right hon. Gentleman more about cooking lessons—a subject which was almost lost sight of. Girls, as well as boys, went out into the world utterly devoid of knowledge of that science. With reference to the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Haddington, he trusted that the right hon. Gentleman would not curtail the powers of the School Boards in regard to holidays in any district they thought fit. All of them were anxious that education should be carried on as far as possible, but there were many circumstances in which it was desirable and absolutely necessary that parents and guardians of the children should have their help in harvest and at other times.

DR. MACNAMARA (Camberwell, N.) said that when he compared the admirable speech which had been made that afternoon by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland with those which had been made from the Treasury and other Benches opposite in 1902–3, he was reduced to a condition of absolute bewilderment. He did not think he could go beyond *Truthful James* when that hero of Bret Harte's poem exclaimed :—

> "Do I sleep; do I dream;
> Do I wander in doubt;
> Are things what they seem,
> Or is visions about ?"

It had been said from the Benches opposite that of the forms of local authority for education to be thrust upon a helpless community the School Board system was the most objectionable. Speaking on the English Education Act of 1902, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University said that the *ad hoc* system was an anachronism, that it was reactionary, that it was recognised that self-government was absolutely impossible unless there was always control of the finances, and that the only way that could be secured in this or any other country, was to place all control, financial and educational, in the hands of the municipal councils. The Goverment had made a complete *volte face* on this matter. Last year they said that the *ad hoc* authority was reactionary, retrograde, hopeless, and extravagant; but that was the system which that afternoon had been retained and extended in Scotland, although every reason for destroying the *ad hoc* authority in London and the great provincial towns of England might have been equally applied to the Scottish School Boards. He looked with envy and delight on the position of Scotland, and he congratulated the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of Scotland upon his action. Why was this? First of all he suggested that they had got a Scottish Prime Minister and a Scottish Leader of the Opposition; but the main reason was that the Government knew that the Scottish people were keen on education, and that if any endeavour had been made to destroy the School Boards in Scotland the people of Scotland would have made sharp retribution. He did not believe the Government believed in School Boards. The experience of the House that afternoon compared with the experience in the debates in 1902–3 was a very fine lesson to the English people. If the English people had cared for their School Boards the Government would not have destroyed them; but because the Scottish people were keen on education and for the retention of their School Boards the Government were afraid to destroy them. It was because of their careless indifference and unconcern in England that the Government had destroyed the great School Boards in England and in London with impunity. This would be an admirable scheme for England and Wales, and would get them out of all their difficulties. He felicitated the Scottish Secretary upon the task he had to perform, which must have been in consonance with his own views; and he also felicitated the Scottish nation whose rapt and stern interest on behalf of education had stood them in such good stead, and which had made it impossible for even the present Government to destroy the School Boards of Scotland. He hoped the Scottish people would remain in the van of education in the United Kingdom as they now were, and that they would continue to put into practice the dictum of their great reformer that every scholar was an addition to the wealth of the community.

MR. MAXWELL (Dumfries-shire) said that he had no doubt that the the Secretary for Scotland would be quite willing to have the advice of educational experts like the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken. He hoped, however, the progress of the Bill would not be hindered by the introduction of English difficulties. There was one point to which the Secretary for Scotland did not refer, namely, the question of endowments. As he understood the Bill, it proposed that local authorities should be set up who would have the management of education in their areas. The right hon. Gentleman was no doubt aware that many of the large endowed schools in Scotland had to make use of their powers to ask the Court of Session to have changes made in their schemes. Unfortunately the smaller endowments had not taken advantage of that power, and many of the schemes were not really doing as much for education as they might. He would not go so far as to suggest that these endowments should be made over to the local education authority; still it was very desirable that the local education authority should have some powers in regard to them. He hoped the Secretary for Scotland would not lose sight of the point.

CAPTAIN ELLICE (St. Andrews Burghs) said he desired to congratulate the Secretary for Scotland on the Bill which he had introduced, and at the same time condole with hon. Members representing English constituencies. Parents in England had, however, a remedy. They could send their children across the border to be educated. He especially congratulated the Secretary for Scotland because the Bill carried out all the pledges he himself had given to his constituents with one exception. That was the superannuation of lady teachers, but perhaps that would be provided for at a later stage. He could not, however, congratulate the Secretary for Scotland on the slur on St. Andrew's University contained in the Bill. He thought it ought to be a meeting place of one of the consultative councils instead of Aberdeen.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) said that the only complaint he had heard of the Bill came from an English Member who wondered why the provisions did not apply to England. He would suggest that an Englishman should come forward and should deal with the priest and the militant opposition, and bring in another Bill. The proposals of the Secretary for Scotland had been received with such an outburst of enthusiasm that he could only say with Charles II., "Why did I not come down sooner and earn this applause before?" With much of the Bill he most cordially agreed, and he only wished they had not had so long to wait for it. They were, he believed, ten years in arrear with it and he felt that the Scottish Administration of the Government had incurred very serious responsibilities from having left the measure over so long. They would now endeavour to make the best of the Bill, which they would consider educationally and not politically or in any sectarian spirit. In Scotland they claimed to have common sense in the matter of education and this Bill would give them absolution in history for many sins committed in the past. With regard to the Bill itself he wished to express entire approval of the district area which, as was apparent, was the most serviceable area for the conduct of local affairs. With that area and the one authority for all classes of education he fully agreed. Nor did he anticipate any difficulty in the matter of local control, and if it were true that some of those areas were large, might it not be considered whether payment should not be made to members of School Boards who were put to considerable expense to attend the meetings at some distance from their homes. It would, in his opinion, lead to the efficiency of the authorities if some such allowance were to be made. As for the local managers he was not quite so sure of the manner of their selection, but that did not give an opportunity for much criticism. The proposition for the transport of children was most admirable, and he presumed it would be required more for the primary than the secondary and technical schools. Then in the matter of food, he would not press for food to be provided, but he would ask whether some provision could not be made in the shape of the necessary articles employed in the preparation of the food. Then he would like to see a better standardisation of pupil teachers, and if the universities could be brought into closer contact with the system of training teachers it would benefit Scottish education as a whole. He did not believe in the councils absolutely, but he did believe in having effective control over the office of the Education Department. A great deal of confidence in the administration of that department was lost last year by the minute governing relief from the rates, and by the circular which restricted Scottish education in primary schools before any co-ordination was introduced into the system of secondary education. Those were two capital errors. He would commend to the right hon. Gentleman opposite a little handbook which he had been permitted to see in the India Office and which defined the relations of the Secretary of State for India with his Council. It was he believed, on such lines as were contained in that handbook that they ought to find a solution of the difficulty of bringing the department under the influence of Scottish opinion. It was not merely a question of the efficiency of the department, but of reviving the interest in educational affairs that had not been noticeable of late years in Scotland. He sincerely trusted that the Bill with some Amendments would have a rapid passage through Parliament.

*MR. JOHN DEWAR hoped the Secretary for Scotland had kept in view in this Bill the necessities of the poorer districts of Scotland, where the rates were abnormally high. In one parish of his constituency the rates in one year came to no less than four shillings in the pound. The Secretary for Scotland had, in the Bill, given power to the School Boards to bring the children to the school. That was very much needed. One school he visited he found contained only six pupils, and four of them belonged to the teacher himself. That was a wasteful method of employing the finances of the School Board. The Bill also reduced the School Board franchise to the same level as the county council franchise. That was an admirable change and one much needed. Many persons in his constituency had a right to vote for Members of Parliament and of the county council, but no right to vote at the election of the School Board. That resulted in a ridiculous position of affairs in many districts. In one school district, with 120 scholars, there were only five parents of these children who had a right to vote for the School Board. In another school, where there were only sixty or eighty scholars, the only parent who had a right to vote for the election of the School Board was the schoolmaster himself. He was glad to say this Bill removed that difficulty. It was a pressing question at the last general election. He would also press, as the hon. Member for Leith had done, that something should be done to give School Boards power to contribute something towards the maintenance of scholars coming long distances. In the Highlands scholars often came from very long distances and in all sorts of weather, and they arrived wet, tired, and hungry, having consumed all the provisions they had. Unless something were done they would have to carry on the work of the day on an empty stomach, and that everybody knew, was not a condition in which a child could take advantage of the education offered. It seemed to him the power of the School Board should be widened in this respect, and that they should contribute something towards this very desirable object. He also thought that, in the West of Scotland particularly, the powers of the Board should be extended to embrace the teaching of trades to boys attending the schools. As he had pointed out, these boys never saw any trades being carried on—never saw any builders, joiners, or blacksmiths at work. He knew the Secretary for Scotland had promised a Bill in which these powers should be given to the Congested Districts Board, but he suggested that money should be taken in this Bill for that purpose instead of money given to the Congested Districts Board. He would like to congratulate the Secretary for Scotland on the Bill which seemed an excellent one.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) congratulated the Secretary for Scotland on this most excellent Bill. They were very happy to know that the School Boards were to be retained in Scotland, instead of being done away with, as they had in the case of the last Education Act for England. It was very important, however, that the areas covered by the smaller School Boards should not be too large, so that local interest might not be extinguished. He was sure that much good would be done if members of the School Boards were encouraged to drop into schools when inspection was being carried on. It was a very important point that in these large areas teachers in the smaller districts should have some reasonable chance of rising in their profession, instead of being confined continuously to one district. Their professional horizon should be enlarged by the prospect of getting promotion. It was a great grievance among teachers in remote districts that they were confined to rudimentary teaching, and were prevented from exercising their knowledge in the higher work of teaching. The subject of the dismissal of teachers was one which he was glad to find was dealt with as it should be. Cases had not been general, but there had been occasionally instances of arbitrary dismissal for some purely local reason or personal squabble. He was of opinion that teachers should, in the case of capricious dismissal, be entitled to place their grievance before a higher tribunal. As to physical training, he was very glad to know that the right hon. Gentleman had taken this subject to heart and he hoped he would take pains to see that proper physical training in schools was carried out. This was a most important matter and he hoped it would be the subject of a full-dress debate in that House. They heard a great deal about the physical deterioration of the children and he had no doubt that there was considerable truth in the assertion. The root and branch of the whole business was that the children were not properly fed. It was inevitable that want of proper nourishment should lead to stunted growth. In his opinion something should be done to see that children were fed regularly during school hours, and if a practical suggestion with this object were made, a great deal of good would undoubtedly result. Much was already accomplished in this direction by private enterprise, but this was not enough. It was notorious that children well fed were in a much better condition to take in knowledge than those who were underfed. If children were compelled to go to school in all conditions of weather, it was not going too far to say that some provision should be made by the State or by the public authority to see that they were properly fed. He was very glad that the Secretary for Scotland had directed his mind to the physical side of the subject, and he was quite sure that if he did take action in the matter he would earn the gratitude of children and parents alike.

Mr. BLACK desired to join with those who had already spoken in congratulating the right hon. Gentleman on the endeavour he had made to solve the problem now before him. He thought, however, that it would be a great misfortune if this Bill were to be read a first time without something more being said with regard to the old parochial schools and School Board system. It would be a great matter for regret if they were allowed to be wiped out "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung." The first essential of Scotch education was that it should be Scotch, and the old parochial system loomed large in the eyes of the nation. This Bill proposed to do away in large measure with that system, because, although it retained the idea of local managers in the way of local management committees, partly appointed by the parish council, these committees were very restricted in their functions, for they had no rating function, nor any function in relation to the appointment or dismissal of teachers. He was very much afraid that one of the effects of the proposed system would be to throw the direction of education in some measure into the hands of the people who had taken part in the county councils in the past instead of into the hands of local people. It would be a great misfortune if that were allowed to take place, and if the personal touch of the people, especially of the lower middle class, with the schools was diminished or damaged. He could not say more without seeing the Bill itself, and he felt that hon. Members would be wise to insist upon seeing the actual provisions of the measure before committing themselves further in regard to it.

MR. JOHN WILSON (Glasgow, St. Rollox) said the Secretary for Scotland had gauged in a remarkable manner the feeling of the people of Scotland with regard to the educational question, especially of the people in the great towns. Did the Secretary for Scotland intend to put down cumulative voting?

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON urged that the Bill should not be sent to the newspapers before it was in the hands of Members of the House. He also asked that it should be distributed to Members in time for them to place it before their constituents during the holidays.

MR. AINSWORTH (Argyllshire) drew attention to the desirability of teaching Gaelic in the Highland schools. It was almost necessary, he contended, that the teachers employed in the schools should have a knowledge of Gaelic in order to teach children English. In reply to the argument so often used that Gaelic was no use to children in after life he pointed out that if a child had a knowledge of Gaelic as well as English in his early life he would acquire much more easily any modern language.

THE MASTER OF ELIBANK (Edinburgh, Midlothian) drew attention to the practice of sending the poor children of Glasgow and Edinburgh to institutions in Midlothian, as a consequence of which the cost of the education of these children fell upon the local authorities in Midlothian. As long ago as 1898 the attention of the Government had been directed to this matter, and he mentioned it now because he thought it would be a convenient time to deal with it.

MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY said he would try and give an answer as simply as he could to the various Questions put to him. The hon. Member for Midlothian asked him a Question. He knew quite well to what he referred — the great difficulty in connection with the homes of various sorts which had been established. There was one question well known to hon. Members of the House in connection with the Quarriers' Homes. He could not say there was any provision in the Bill dealing with them. It was a subject full of difficulty. He could assure the hon. Member if he would try his hand at a clause to bring about a remedy he would find what serious difficulties there were in the way. He was not prepared to go the whole length of absolving a parish from duties with regard to the education of those who happened to be within its borders. He should be very glad if any hon. Member could give him any assistance on this subject. With regard to the cumulative vote, it would be inconsistent with the plan of having a member for each electoral district. The Bill did not, obviously, deal with the question of the teaching of Gaelic, and this was a matter to be regulated by the local authorities. It was altogether outside the Bill to take up any question of curriculum. The poorer districts would necessarily get a considerable amount of absorption in the larger areas. There were provisions under the Bill which would make it possible for assistance to be given to any education authority, or set of education authorities, which might choose to combine to start anything in the nature of a training college. He disagreed with the hon. Member for St. Andrews Burghs, who said it was a slur on the St. Andrews University that it was not to be one of the meeting places of the councils. He (Mr. A. Graham Murray) would be the last to cast a slur on St. Andrews University, but St. Andrews would obviously not be a convenient centre for the proposed meeting place.

CAPTAIN ELLICE said he thought the desire was to get the Universities interested in education, and if that was what was desired he should have thought the best place to meet would be St. Andrews.

MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY said St. Andrews would have as much representation as any other University. The

Bill did not touch endowments at all. As to the price of books, that would necessarily be alleviated by the larger area. The question of the expense of keeping a child at school after it had passed a certain standard did not fall within the scope of the Bill at all. It would be the duty of the education authority one year after the passing of the Bill to furnish the Department with a report in regard to the condition of education in their district. The Department would then consider whether, taking everything in view, it was necessary to start other institutions or not. He had already explained, in answer to a Question, the nature of the rate and what the School Board might give to institutions not under its own control. That did not mean, of course, grants out of the Education Fund going through the School Board at all. They would be paid out of the local education fund just as at present.

MR. THOMAS SHAW asked whether the subvention would be affected by the Bill.

MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY said the old three shillings subvention was not touched, and it would obviously be an extraordinary injustice to take it away. He thought he had answered every point raised by hon. Members, but there was one matter to which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Aberdeen had alluded, and to which he desired to refer. In thanking the House very cordially for the exceedingly favourable reception it had given to the Bill—and he was quite certain that fair play and even more than fair play would be shown in the subsequent proceedings—he wished to say that the credit to a large extent was not his, but belonged to his noble friend, who, he was sorry to say, was not still with them. They could not, however, as was the manner of angels, occupy the same needle point at the same time. The general scheme of the Bill was determined so long ago as last summer by his noble friend, assisted by himself. Of course it was not framed at that time. Since then, in the actual construction of the Bill, whilst carrying out general principles, they had considered very carefully and, on many occasions, the whole of the details. They had taken those that seemed to be best, and that best had overcome the difficulties that arose. But on those matters they were not wedded to them, and in the future passage of the measure, if they chose to alter the matter of local managers, the proportion, and so on, if they chose to cut out the scheme even of provincial councils, he should not consider it in any way vital to the Bill. The one vital principle was that one central authority was to be the authority for primary and secondary education. He hoped the House would find, on consideration of the details, that although there was something to criticise in this plan there would be more to criticise if another plan were to be taken. Upon those matters he only asked for the assistance of the House, and he was quite sure the way in which the Bill had just been received was a favourable augury for its further progress. With regard to the Question of the hon. Member for Dundee as to when the Bill would be placed before hon. Members he could only remark that if the hon. Gentleman represented the feeling of the House he had nothing more to say. It was quite impossible for this Bill—which could not be sent to press before tomorrow, and had to be printed and stitched—to be circulated before the end of the week. Hon. Members would doubtless before that time have gone to Scotland. Their copies would be sent to them through the post and eventually they would receive them after the Bill had appeared in the newspapers, to which it would be sent as soon as it was delivered to the Vote Office. He quite understood the feeling that animated hon. Members in desiring to receive the Bill personally instead of seeing it in the papers, but he really thought that if hon. Members wished to consult their convenience they would in this case allow the Bill to be sent to the newspapers without delay. He, however, was not going do so and then be told that he had not consulted the House of Commons upon the point.

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid.) expressed the opinion that a precedent would be created if the Bill were to be sent to the papers before it was placed in the hands of private Members. He suggested there should be a consultation on the point between the Secretary for Scotland and the Leader of the Opposition.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Bill to amend the Laws relating to Education in Scotland and for other purposes connected therewith, ordered to be brought in by Mr. A. Graham Murray and the Lord Advocate.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"To amend the Laws relating to Education in Scotland and for other purposes connected therewith," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday, 18th April, and to be printed. [Bill 144.]

CONSOLIDATION FUND (No. 1) BILL.

[Third Reading.]

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

Sir JOHN GORST (Cambridge University) said he wished to direct attention to the physical condition of the children in the elementary schools. This matter had been frequently discussed in the House, and he wished to know how long it was to remain a subject of discussion and inquiry, and when the Board of Education would see its way to take some practical steps to ameliorate the condition of the children. The London School Board had had no less than three committees on the subject, and they had collected a great amount of information. The first committee was held as long ago as 1889, the second in 1895, and the third made its report in 1899. All the reports recognised the unfortunate condition of a large number of the children. The first committee reported that 12 per cent. of the total number of children attending the schools of the London School Board were suffering from insufficient nutrition. Although a voluntary association, called the London School Dinner Association, had done an enormous amount of good work in the Metropolis to thousands since that time, the report of the last committee recognised that, in spite of all the efforts that had been made by that association, there were still a considerable number of children in the schools so hungry that they were unable to do the work of the schools. The evidence brought before the School Board committee in regard to St. Bartholomew's School as to children suffering from want of food was only an example of what was happening in hundreds of other schools in London and other great cities in England and Scotland. He did not think there was such evidence forthcoming in the case of country schools, not because the children did not hunger, but because inquiry had not taken place in regard to them. When he was Vice-President of the Council he constantly brought this matter before the House, but he was sorry to say that he never was able to bring the House to a real appreciation of the gravity of the case. A Royal Commission in Scotland which inquired into physical training commented not only on that question but also on the physical condition of the children in the schools. That matter was discussed twice last session, once on the Scotch Estimates and once on the Education Vote. His hon. friend the Secretary to the Board of Education promised at that time that an inquiry should be made in regard to the children of the great towns of England analagous to that made regarding the children of Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

A Commission was appointed nearly a year ago at the instigation of the military authorities to inquire into the alleged deterioration of recruits. A Committee was appointed to draw up the ordinary reference, and to consider how the Commission was to be constituted. He was very glad to say that that Committee was not now to report upon the question of the institution of a Royal Commission, but to consider what were the causes of the deterioration of the health of the children in the schools, and what were the remedies. Now, these causes were perfectly patent, and had been known to the House of Commons for ten or twelve years; they were want of fresh air, want of proper food, want of proper treatment, and want of medical inspection. As to the remedies, of course, opinions might considerably differ. There was not anything like unanimity, but everybody was agreed that some remedy should be applied. It was the duty of Parliament either to prescribe remedies, or to give power to the local authorities which would enable them to prescribe remedies. He did not blame the Board of Education, or his hon. friend the Parliamentary Secretary. He thought they had always been willing to take this matter into consideration, and provide the necessary remedies. What was wanted was a little more pressure from public opinion, and the House of Commons, which would strengthen the hands of the Board of Education and enable them to grapple with this urgent and extremely important question. The mischief done by taking hungry children into schools, and attempting to make them do intellectual or physical work was quite incalculable. It taxed their brain and muscles, and did an injury to the children which no amount of good feeding or physic in after life could eradicate. He hoped his hon. friend would say that the Government and the Board of Education were entirely alive to the gravity of this matter, and that he would be able to give some account to the House as to when they might expect the Report of the Committee, and when practical effect would be given to that Report.

Mr. CROOKS (Woolwich) said he could not let that opportunity pass without trying to persuade the House to encourage the Education Department to follow the suggestions made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University. He feared that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education had but little notion, from reading the reports from various schoolmasters, of what took place in the schools. Only a few days ago a message came to him asking him to use his influence in an endeavour to get a child of under fourteen years of age released from school attendance. He asked why, and was told that she was wanted to nurse her father who was a chronic invalid, while the mother went out to work to get the necessaries of life for the family. That child when compelled to go to school had, through the kindness of the teacher—to his everlasting credit—been allowed to sleep instead of trying to learn lessons. He knew that when it was suggested that these poor children should be fed, it was said that that would be to relieve parents of their responsibilty. He knew that there was a percentage of bad fathers and mothers; but then, by refusing to feed the children, we were punishing the children, and not the bad fathers and mothers. It was a remarkable thing that, in consequence of the action of the House and Government, certain diseases of children, such as ophthalmia and ringworm, had been stamped out of the Poor Law schools, but there was a perpetual recruiting ground for children with such ailments in the outside schools, where there were so many children without fresh air and good food. Why should that be? Simply because of the heroic efforts of mothers and fathers to remain out of the workhouse until they could stand it no longer. The only thing which cured these children was not so much medical attendance as fresh air and good feeding. It should be remembered it was from these children that recruits were drawn for the Army and Navy, and yet they were denied fresh air, good food, and sound sleep in the very years of their life when they most wanted them. If the guardians in one district tried to remedy the evil by means of outdoor relief, those in the next district might be against outdoor relief, in order to compel the people to go into the workhouse, and, to the everlasting credit of the British workman and his wife, they stayed out of the workhouse as long as they could. But then the children suffered. These poor people lived in a one-roomed house in a slum, not because they liked it, but because they could not afford anything else; and they starved in the slum until they could do so no longer. A Thackeray or a Dickens was needed to do justice to the heroism of some of the women who were looked down upon for their supposed neglect of the personal cleanliness of their children, when their energies were absorbed in the struggle to obtain food for the husband, who was out of work, and the little ones, and to pay the rent. Three women came to him the other day, not in their own interest, but asking him if he could not give the woman at the corner some few half-pence. That poor woman was trying to earn a living by casual work, and her neighbours had shared their loaves with her, but they could not afford to do more, and she was crying because she had nothing to give the children when they came out of school at twelve o'clock. What a Christian nation we were! Sometimes a woman who had got a day's work to scrub out a room, did not return until midnight, with perhaps eighteen pence, and the remnants of some employer's dinner, and when she got into her slum room, she would be greeted by the cry of the little children waking up from their sleep—"Is that mother? Have you got anything to eat?" She would feed them and they would fall asleep again on the floor; and it was in these circumstances that the mother was often abused for not cleansing her children properly. Thousands of such cases were known, and the House could not shirk its responsibility for those children. They must realise their responsibility, for none of these things ought to happen in a country governed like ours. They had no right to shut their eyes and say it was no business of theirs. He contended that it was their business. The money now spent on their education was wasted, as it would not be in the feeding of the children. The nation had to pay ten times over when the children and the parents broke down through living in a vitiated atmosphere and through bad feeding. The payment was only made from the rates instead of the taxes. It was the work of the nation; and it was fearfully hard that because the poor were segregated, the poor should be obliged to keep the poor, and that the rates should run up to 10s. in the £. It was surely time that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Education should look into these matters. It might be possible for Parliament to make mistakes in some things, and for the county councils to make some mistakes in spending the rates, these could be remedied; but when mistakes were made in regard to children, and the bringing up of children, they were mistakes which could not be easily remedied. Every day that passed thousands and thousands of children were badly fed, and insufficiently clothed, and every succeeding day made matters worse. There were many people, to their credit be it said, who insisted that it would be a good thing if the feeding of these children was part of their school curriculum. If that were done, what a fine race we should grow up, and it would be found that England did not exist for a few, but for all. He did not ask the hon. Baronet to get up and give his sympathy only; he wanted his help, and he wanted him to remember that every day that went by made it still more difficult to overtake the evil.

*THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Sir WILLIAM ANSON, Oxford University) said that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University had opened a subject on which he had always felt very strongly. Anyone who had to do with the elementary education of this country must realise that this was the most heartbreaking aspect of the educational question. If they took two schools in London, one in a fairly well-to-do district, and another in a poor district, and compared the results of the teaching in each, they would find the attendance good in both, the teaching good, and the children well behaved, but simply for want of proper nutrition and home care the children in the one school were immeasurably inferior in the results of that teaching to the children in the other. The right hon. Gentleman had asked what was going to be done as regarded the Committee of Inquiry appointed last summer. That Committee started on somewhat different lines from those which it had ultimately followed. It was based on the number of recruits rejected, and it was appointed with a view to ascertaining whether a Royal Commission should not be appointed to inquire into the general question of physical deterioration. The Board of Education felt it was very largely interested in the matter, and it was represented on the Committee. The reference implied the duty of ascertaining what steps should be taken to furnish the Government with a periodical set of facts as to the physical condition of the people and to try to indicate the causes of the deterioration and to point out the means by which it might be improved. The Committee began to sit in the winter, and they found that the British Association had appointed a committee, of which Professor Cunningham was chairman, to inquire into the same subject. The Committee put itself in communication with the committee of the British Association, which met them in a most cordial spirit. Professor Cunningham gave evidence, and the scheme already outlined by the British Association committee was sent to the College of Physicians and the College of Surgeons. The College of Surgeons had sent back word that they cordially approved of the proposed scheme, that there should be a regular survey of the population of the United Kingdom — of the agricultural and working population and of the children in the schools, and that means should be taken to ascertain their physical condition at the school age. The College of Physicians were still considering the matter. It was hoped that by proper management it might be possible to cover the whole of the United Kingdom every ten years, so that there might be a complete survey of the United Kingdom in the course of every ten years. This Committee had gone into the question of the life of the child from infancy up to the school age, during the school age, and during the period of adolescence. It had gone very carefully into the question of the nutrition of the children, and on these points members of the medical profession had given most valuable evidence. He believed also that his right hon. friend the Member for Cambridge University and the hon. Gentleman the Member for North Camberwell would also give evidence. He hoped the Committee would report at no distant date, and then they would be in possession of the facts as to the physical condition of the children, and they would have what the Committee conceived to be the causes of the evil and their suggested remedy. He did not think that the House would expect him to say more on the subject at present, but he wished the House to understand that the inquiries being made were of a most practical character, and that the Committee were going into the actual causes of the physical ailments and physical shortcomings of the children at school and before they went to school.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) said he desired to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant one or two Questions. Before doing so he desired to testify to the emotion with which the House heard the hon. Gentleman the Member for Woolwich, and how glad he was that the class for whom the hon. Gentleman spoke had at last found a spokesman in the House. The Chief Secretary would remember that he asked him a Question in the afternoon as to whether he had any information with reference to what occurred at a meeting held at the Ancient Concert Rooms in Dublin on Thursday evening last. The meeting turned out to be divided in opinion, and it was no part of his business to express any opinion as to the object for which the meeting was called. All he wished was to ask the Chief Secretary whether his attention had been called to the action of the police on the occasion. According to the newspaper reports, after the chairman had left the chair a body of police marched into the hall and proceeded to violently expel a number of ladies and gentlemen. He himself had received information that a great deal of unnecessary violence was used by the police; and he was given to understand that a number of ladies and several gentlemen of position in Dublin were roughly expelled from the hall. He asked to know by what authority the police acted in this way, and whether the police had any right to enter the hall at all and violently turn out a number of people when there was no turbulence beyond an ordinary difference of opinion which might occur at any meeting in England as well as in Ireland. Another curious circumstance was that the meeting was practically at an end when the police arrived, and their action was very calculated to lead to a serious disturbance. He himself was surprised that there was not retaliation on the occasion. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman by what authority the police entered the hall and violently expelled a number of ladies and gentlemen who were prepared to leave, the meeting being at an end, if not interfered with by the police. He observed in the newspapers that the Lord-Lieutenant had ordered an inquiry into the conduct of the police. What would be the nature of that inquiry and would it be open to the Press and the public? If it were not it would not be a satisfactory inquiry. This was a serious matter, affecting the right of public meeting in Ireland and an inquiry on oath should be held.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) said that the hon. Member put a Question to him that afternoon, and a certain amount of information had since reached him on the subject by telegraph. The hon. Member, however, had raised points of law on which he should not now like to speak with confidence. He and others had read newspaper accounts of the proceedings which involved certain regrettable features, but they would see that the reports were conflicting. Information which had reached him went to show that the meeting became of a very disorderly character; and it was stated that the disorderly element was due to the action of representatives of the Gaelic League, but this was repudiated in the Press to-day. The proceedings were of a more disorderly character than the hon. Member seemed to suppose. It appeared that no motion could be put for a space of something like two and a half hours. He expressed his intention of replying to the specific Questions put by the hon. Member without giving any legal opinion. He understood that the chairman of the meeting, Sir James Murphy, who was chairman of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce, had hired the hall and was responsible for the furniture. Seeing that the excitement was growing, and forming the opinion that the furniture would very likely suffer and that he would be responsible for the damage, and forming the opinion also that a breach of the peace was likely to arise, and as the uproar continued and was likely to continue, he sent for the police and the proceedings came to an abrupt conclusion either just before or at the moment the police entered. The police having been sent for were bound to go; and the information which he had received from Sir Antony Macdonnell, Mr. MacNeill, and the inspector of police, seemed to show that no unnecessary force was used. He should not like without receiving and considering a written report in all its bearings to go further and lay down the law.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) said the right hon. Gentleman had informed them that at the time the police arrived the proceedings had come to an abrupt close, and this bore out the statement in the newspapers. At a certain period the chairman came to the conclusion that the proceedings could not go on, and he and his friends left the platform and the room, and the proceedings came to a sudden close just as the police came in. What did the police do? According to all reports the meeting having been practically closed and the disorder ended, the police proceeded to assault and drive out of the room a number of the people who still remained. There was no allegation that the disorder continued when the police came; the disorder came to an end when the chairman and his friends left the platforma nd the hall. The police came in and began to hustle, and, he was informed, assault the people and drive them out. The right hon. Gentleman had said nothing about an inquiry, though his hon. friend said he knew an inquiry had been ordered by the Lord-Lieutenant.

Mr. WYNDHAM said that report was based on the fact that inquiries had been made.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND said that this being so they were bound to press the right hon. Gentleman to undertake that there would be an inquiry. It was perfectly monstrous that the police should have been allowed to go in when the disorder was over, and to begin to lay about them and assault people of respectability in Dublin. The right hon. Gentleman's story was inconsistent with facts. The disorder was in the gallery and not in the body of the hall; apparently the police did not go to the gallery at all. They went into the body of the hall and proceeded to assault a number of ladies and gentlemen, some of whom he (Mr. Redmond) was personally acquainted with, and whom he knew to be respectable. One gentleman was the Secretary of the Gaelic League, and another gentleman, Alderman Cole, was a member of the corporation; and there were some ladies whose names he could mention, and who certainly were not engaged in creating any disturbance or disorder. An occurrence like this, he thought, justified them in asking the right hon. Gentleman to hold an inquiry into the matter, an open inquiry, and an inquiry upon oath, so that those persons might be able to come forward and give their version of the transaction. He thought, indeed, they were bound to press the right hon. Gentleman to give them an undertaking that this matter would be inquired into.

Mr. WYNDHAM said he should not give that undertaking until he had had a written report. He had telegraphed for information and it did not bear out the view the hon. and learned Member had put forward. Until he had had an opportunity of seeing whether there had been any exaggeration, as he believed there had been, he could not give any undertaking, but, if he found that a case had been made out for an inquiry, he would consider the matter further.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork County, N.) said that they were not going into the details of the question at all, but, *primâ facie*, there was no justification for the conduct of the police. From all the reports that he had read the facts were quite plain, and from the reports it appeared that the only thing which might be characterised as violence was that two of three gentlemen had spoken for an undue length. If that were so, then this House had frequently been violent and disorderly. There was absolutely no justification for a large body of police entering a public hall and proceeding forcibly to eject and assault people in this way, and Irish representatives were justified in demanding a full inquiry into the matter.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) drew attention to the situation in the European provinces of Turkey. He said he was not going to bring any charges against the Government, nor to object to the general lines of their policy. The Civil officers appointed under the Austro-Russian scheme seemed to have very little influence on what was happening, and the Turkish Government had exercised the art of obstruction with considerable success in connection with the reorganisation of the gendarmerie under General de Giorgis. It was originally intended that General de Giorgis and his staff should be free to give orders to the Turkish officers, and also that they should have as many officers as they thought necessary for the purposes of their work. Considering that it covered a very large territory, it was clear that a large number of officers might be required. The Turks, however, said that they would not have more than twenty-five—a number which was quite useless for the purposes of the work. The Turkish Government also appeared to be unwilling to consider the proposal that General de Giorgis should be able to give orders to the Turks, but if General de Giorgis was to do any good at all he ought to have the power of dismissal as well as the giving of orders. It was, therefore, not too much to say that the proper practical working of the scheme of reform was in danger. Those who had followed the newspapers knew what the spirit of the Turkish Government in the matter really was. They were very much indebted in particular to *The Times* for the admirable and vigorous reports which it had given upon the situation. He would especially call attention to the obstruction which the Government at Constantinople had placed in the way of the work of the hospitals for the relief and succour of the refugees and the wounded, which had been established by the munificence and the charity of people in this country.

He confessed to feeling regret for two things which had been done by His Majesty's Government, although it was impossible to impeach their policy as a whole or to refuse a frank acknowledgment of the spirit in which Lord Lansdowne had approached the question. It seemed a little unfortunate that he should have left the initiative so largely to Austria and Russia and not have vindicated for Great Britain that place in the front rank of the negotiations and in the carrying out of reforms which historically belonged to her. He also regretted that Lord Lansdowne, no doubt with the best intentions, should have abandoned the alternative scheme of which he himself most approved—that of appointing a Christian Governor of these provinces—in favour of the scheme of supervision and control which it was now found so difficult to put into practical operation. His own original idea would have been more effective. He thought if Great Britain had claimed to have an important voice in this matter and had been seconded as she would have been, by France and Germany, much greater progress would have been made. As the House knew, there had been for the last three or four months very considerable danger that the insurrection would break out afresh. It had been suggested that the Turks thought they might escape from the unwelcome necessity of having to carry out the reforms if insurgent movements recommenced, and that they were protracting the present negotiations with the wish that such disturbances might again appear as a legitimate excuse for saying that they could not carry out the reforms while the country was in a state of insurrection. It would be very melancholy if that were true; but there were so many reasons for fearing the procrastinating policy adopted by the Turks that one could not readily say that the suggestion was untenable. This at least was certain. The sands were running out, and every week that passed brought nearer the time when the snow would have melted, when the roads would again be open, and when the insurgents, if they were going to make another rising, would rise. The time fixed as most dangerous was from the middle till the end of April, and therefore it became of the greatest importance that these pending questions should be settled, and that a substantial beginning of reforms should be made before April ended. He had no doubt that the Government felt that as strongly as he did, but he would like to ask them what they thought about the prospect generally.

MR. MOON (St. Pancras, N.) agreed that this was no Party question. Both sides of the House wished to put a termination to the unhappy state of things prevailing in Macedonia. In particular, they wished to show to other nations that they observed with regret the protracted delays which had marked the negotiations and attempts at reform. The British public were under the impression that the reform scheme had been in operation for some months, but, as a fact, the contrary was the case. After the presentation of the scheme to the Porte, two or three months were allowed to elapse before the persons who were to carry out the scheme were appointed. He referred to the latest information about the attitude of the Porte as most disappointing and misleading. Surely it was the idea of every one that the gendarmerie officers should have the right to order the gendarmerie about to any scenes of disturbance. If they were merely to cause the men to be drilled and then allow the Turkish officers to have the effective command, it was hard to see what was the use of having European officers at all. With regard to the criticisms of the right hon. Gentleman, he held that it was a reasonable course for this Government, after their experience of the European Concert, to try the experiment of getting the work done by what might be called a sub-committee of the Concert, but he thought, at the same time, that Russia and Austria-Hungary would feel that the House of Commons considered they had acted with unfortunate want of energy, to put it in the mildest terms, while Turkey, in obstructing us, was doing itself a very ill service indeed, and was its own worst enemy.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.) called attention to the negotiations for a convention or treaty between this country and France for the settlement of a vast variety of questions which were now a subject of dispute between the two nations. Everybody would be glad to see those questions solved, but his complaint was that, whereas treaties and conventions made between two Continental nations were submitted to the representatives of those nations before they were ratified, in this country a treaty of the greatest possible importance might be entered into and the representatives of the people be in complete ignorance of its terms and conditions. He thought it an unfortunate thing that so great a power should rest in the hands of the Executive for the time being. Such a power was unconstitutional, and although in past times it might have been injurious to the country, there might have been good reason for such a power. In olden times it was possible to keep these matters secret but it was not possible now. In the present case, while the Government had kept the Press of this country in tolerably complete ignorance, the French Press had obtained a great deal of information which ought to be before this country previous to any treaty being made. In the *République Française* and the *Echo de Paris* there had appeared full and apparently tolerably accurate accounts of the proposals. He went on to comment on the details of these proposals as revealed in the French journals, and spoke of the British concessions regarding Newfoundland, and particularly the concession of the right of the French fishermen to take bait, as very important and an adequate offset for any concession which the French might make to us.

And, it being half-past Seven of the clock, the debate stood adjourned till this Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [28th March], "That the Bill be now read the third time."

Question again proposed.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE, continuing his speech, said that in years past the English Government had had a good deal of difficulty in persuading the responsible Ministry of Newfoundland to pass from year to year the *modus vivendi* which was necessary to continue the agreement between this country and France. The sooner the necessity for that persuasion ceased the better it would be for all parties. There were other countries to be considered in reference to the negotiations with France. The first was Morocco. In that case it was impossible for His Majesty's Government to make any territorial sacrifices as we had no territory to give up, but we had a distinguished position with regard to Morocco which might be sacrificed if the matter were not very carefully considered. He understood the view of the French Government was that their interests along the borderland of Morocco, which touched Algiers, were so important as to give them the right to morally dominate the Sultan and the empire of Morocco. Such a domination would inevitably lead to a political occupation of that country. Morocco was a relic of barbarism in the midst of civilised empires, and what the French aimed at was first, commercial supremacy, and finally political occupation. But we had very great commercial interests in that country. Our trade with Morocco amounted to £1,500,000 a year, and that could not be lightly endangered. We had even more serious political and military interests at stake; and before any settlement was arrived at he would like to know whether the Defence Committee would be consulted with reference to any possible danger that might threaten Gibraltar, and thus endanger the greatest fortress we had on the Mediterranean, if the coast-line of Morocco were in the occupation of another Power. Events might arise if the coast-line of Morocco was in the hands of France, which might compel that country to disregard any obligations she had entered into with us and thus practically close up the mouth of the Mediterranean to our fleets. Questions affecting Egypt and Siam were also involved in the proposed treaty; and what he was anxious to press on the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs was that the negotiations, or, at all events, the facts of the negotiations, between this country and France should be presented to the House of Commons before any definite understanding was come to.

Mr. CHARLES ALLEN (Gloucestershire, Stroud), referring to Macedonian affairs, said he had no desire to criticise the Government in any way, first of all because he knew how difficult and dangerous the problem was, and, secondly, because, under the circumstances, any criticism must be largely uninstructed. But he did wish to lay emphasis on the fact that time was pressing. Already they had renewed stories of the activity of Bulgarian bands, and soon all the mountain paths of Macedonia would be open. He would, therefore, press the noble Lord to use his influence with the Government to accelerate, as far as possible, the organisation of the gendarmerie of that country. Organisation in Turkey was always difficult, and the organisation of this gendarmerie was especially difficult, and would become impossible if the rebellion broke out again. War would probably follow another outbreak of the disturbances, for the ground had been preparing for it for years, and Bulgaria was probably more prepared and more willing to make war than she was a year ago. Every spring the Macedonians in hundreds crossed the frontier to find employment; and the stories they carried of misrule, murder, and outrage in their own land and the accounts they carried back of constitutional Government and personal freedom in Bulgaria amounted to the preparation of a mine that might at any time explode. He did not wish to criticise His Majesty's Government, but he earnestly pressed them to do their utmost to effect a beginning in the work of organisation to the extent of getting European officers into the Macedonian villages. This would be evidence to the people, who were ignorant of what was going on in Europe, that something was really being done on their behalf.

Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) wished to know what progress, if any, had been made in the attempt to come to a satisfactory settlement with the signatories to the North Sea Fisheries Convention in reference to fishing in the Moray Firth and trawling there by foreign vessels. He also desired to know why the Inland Revenue had not refunded the excess of 4d. in the pound for income tax which the Board had deducted from dividends paid in April last to holders of Cape 4 per cent. stock. He was a small stockholder himself, and had had his claim satisfied through the London and Westminster Bank, but the amount of the overcharge amounted in all to £166,000, and this in honesty should be returned. Any honest commercial firm when they found they had been overpaid would at once refund the money, and he wished to know what the Government was going to do for the thousands and tens of thousands of widows and orphans whose money was invested in these securities, and who by the action of the Government in this matter were out of pocket to the extent of £166,000. How much of that £166,000 had been repaid and how much had been retained by the Inland Revenue? The Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated in reply to a Question that the matter was very complicated and that it would take trouble and time to ascertain how much was still in hand. That system of book-keeping was not creditable, and he was ashamed that the British Government should conduct its business in such a manner. He hoped that the Inland Revenue would take steps to have this matter looked to. He complained that the arrangements in Scotland for the supply of lymph for vaccination purposes was of a very unsatisfactory character, and stated that the present system of allowing an official of the Local Government Board, who was receiving a handsome salary, to carry on a trade in lymph was not a creditable state of affairs. Vaccination was compulsory in Scotland, there being no "conscience clause" as in England. It was, therefore, all the more necessary that proper arrangements should be made for the supply of a genuine standard of calf lymph. If that were done he doubted very much whether there would be so many objectors. He asked the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether steps were being taken to induce the Chinese Government to have the obstruction on the Canton River removed. The Chinese Government two years ago entered into an engagement to remove the obstructions, but were very shifty indeed, and it was necessary to be very persistent in our efforts.

*The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Earl Percy, Kensington, S.) said with regard to the latter point raised by the hon. Member, they had a treaty right to demand the removal of the obstructions, and the Chinese Government had already taken preliminary steps to secure their removal. The hon. Member for East Bristol dealt with the question of negotiations at present proceeding between our Government and the French Government. He understood that the hon. Member thought that, as certain discussions had taken place in the French Press, therefore the French public were placed in a better position than people in this country. He did not think that that was so. The conjectures in the French Press had been repeated in the English Press and, therefore, they were at the disposal of everyone. It would be quite contrary to precedent to enter into any discussion of questions of that character which were under negotiation and with regard to which, he was perfectly certain, there was an earnest desire in that House that they should reach a satisfactory conclusion.

He passed from this subject to what had been said by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Aberdeen, and several other speakers, with regard to Macedonia. They had discussed this question only six weeks ago, and he did not think the House would expect him to say that there had been any change in the general policy adopted by the Government. He did not understand that the right hon. Gentleman attacked that general policy, but he did say that it was a pity that the Government had delegated the initiative in regard to the reforms to what the Member for St. Pancras had spoken of as a sub-committee of the Powers, and thought we should have made greater progress if we had adopted the initiative ourselves. He hoped that everyone looked upon the action of this country with regard to Macedonia as entirely disinterested; but if we had thrust ourselves to the front, that very fact might have suggested that we had an ulterior motive. The right hon. Gentleman suggested that we might have co-operated in the front line with Italy and France; but he would admit that, if we had taken that course, we should have been acting as a sub-committee of the Powers in precisely the same way as Austria and Russia. We deliberately adopted a back seat, if he might use the expression, in regard to these reforms, and encouraged Austria and Russia to take the initiative, for reasons which had been often explained. They were closer to the seat of action, they had most to fear from a violent disturbance of the *status quo*, and there had been a general agreement between them in regard to the Balkans for some years past. But he did not admit that, because we had not ostentatiously taken the initiative, therefore we had not occupied a prominent position. As a matter of fact, Lord Lansdowne himself suggested the appointment of the two civil assessors, and put forward the appointment of a Christian Governor as an alternative. The appointment of two civil assessors was accepted by the two Powers, and in that respect, at all events, this scheme represented the policy of Lord Lansdowne.

The general policy of His Majesty's Government was, and always had been, to support the scheme of the two Powers, with the reservation that it was the irreducible minimum of reform which we could accept, and, if that scheme should unfortunately prove to be a failure, we reserved to ourselves full liberty to put forward alternative proposals of our own. He deplored the delay which had taken place in putting this scheme into effective operation, and he quite agreed that every day the delay continued the less chance of ultimate success there would be. But he thought it was somewhat premature to describe as a failure a scheme which had not yet been applied, and that it would be time enough to so describe it if the two Powers introduced into the scheme limitations and modifications which were inconsistent with its fundamental principles, or if the demands which the two Powers put forward were refused by the Porte. He was happy to say that at present we were not confronted with either of these contingencies. The Powers had been careful to insist that their agents, both civil and military, should have all the power and authority which would be necessary for the adequate discharge of their duties, and the Turkish Government, although they had not yet signified their assent to these demands, had certainly not met them with a categorical refusal. In point of fact, His Majesty's Government had been informed by our Ambassador that the reply of the Porte might be considered as, on the whole, satisfactory. No one regretted more than he did that any part of the responsibility for the delay which had occurred should be attributable to the Turkish Government. He regretted it not so much in the interests of the subject population of these provinces, because he thought the Powers were deeply pledged that their interests should not suffer whatever became of this or any other reform—he regretted it far more in the interests of the Turkish Government itself. He was one of those who thought that the Turks did not always receive strict justice at the hands of hon. Members in this House; that sufficient allowance was not always made for the very real difficulties with which the Turkish Government was confronted, or for the susceptibilities of their Mussulman subjects; and that hon. Members were too apt to attribute any delay for which the Turkish Government were responsible to the very worst motives, while saying very little of the delay, not less mischievous, however inevitable, which was attributable to the action of the Chancelleries of Europe. He regretted that attitude on the part of some Members of this House, because it tended to deprive their opinions and their warnings of that weight and authority at Constantinople which their position in English politics might otherwise enable them to exert. But holding that view, he held all the more strongly that it was the duty of those who could take a more dispassionate view to lose no opportunity of impressing upon the Turkish Government that the only result of delaying or imperilling the success of the present reform scheme would be to force upon the consideration of the Powers alternative proposals, which, however effective for the object in view, would certainly be far more distasteful to Turkey. The reforms which they were now pressing upon the Turkish Government were eminently reasonable in character; they did not in the least degree derogate from the sovereign rights of the Sultan, they would confer nothing but benefit upon every class of his subjects, and they were reforms of a kind that had long been eagerly demanded and would certainly be welcomed by a large section of the Mussulman portion of the population.

They could not forget that Turkey had long ago pledged herself on paper to reforms vaguer perhaps but more drastic and far-reaching in their character than anything contained in the present scheme; and it was obvious that the European Powers might at any moment be driven, by delay that amounted to obstruction or by a refusal of their demands, to demand the execution of the pledges of the Berlin Treaty in their literal and original form. He did not wish in the slightest degree to excuse the Turkish Government for any delay for which they were responsible, but it was only fair to say that the largest responsibility for the delay which had occurred was not attributable to them. General di Giorgis did not arrive in Constantinople until the beginning of February, and the reforms in their latest form were not presented to the Porte until the first week in March. The delay had been due to the extreme difficulty of settling a number of comparatively small technical points to the satisfaction of the various European Powers who had undertaken to play an active part in this work of reorganisation. The principal points which had been under discussion had been the question of ways and means, the manner in which the gendarmerie force was to be paid, the question of the position which was to be occupied by the European officers, and the question of the areas which were to be assigned as their respective spheres of activity. In regard to all these points he thought they might congratulate themselves that some progress had been made. The question of ways and means had been settled with commendable promptitude by the assignment of a large portion of the tithes and taxes of the three vilayets, amounting to £280,000, which were not already assigned for the service of the debt and the railways, and it was understood that those revenues would be paid direct to General di Giorgis by the Ottoman Bank without the intervention of the Turkish Minister of Finance. With regard to the powers and duties of the European officers, their position would not be more anomalous than the position of the two civil assessors. They would be in the service of the Turkish Government, but they would take their orders from the Italian General, and if they were guilty of any offence they would be tried by a Court of their own nationals. He entirely agreed with the view which the right hon. Gentleman expressed with regard to the character of the powers and duties which it would be necessary for these officers to exercise. It was intended that they should be the medium of communicating to the Turkish officers the orders which they received from the Italian general and the staff officers, and they were to report to headquarters any case of disobedience to those orders and any case in which a member of that force was incapacitated either physically or mentally for the proper discharge of the duties which he had to perform.

He could not make a definite statement just now with reference to the number of officers to be sent out. That point was still under discussion, but the Government long ago warned the officers whom we should be ready to employ. But it was impossible to say, until they received the text of the demands presented, how many officers would be required in order to carry out the work of reorganisation. He believed that at the present moment the Turkish Government had assented to the employment of twenty-five of these foreign officers. He thought that our best course would be to send out at once the officers for whom sanction had already been obtained. Although the position of these officers might be anomalous their position would be a strong one, because their recommendations would have the united support of the Powers at Constantinople, and the officers themselves would be irremovable. The Powers would also make it clear that if the authority now claimed, or the number of officers now employed, were not adequate for the purpose, additional officers and further powers would be claimed.

It had been decided also that the forces of the different European Powers were not to be mixed in the same area. Each Power was to have a separate area to itself, and those areas would follow, roughly, the divisions of the civil administrative areas. There would be five of these areas, because Germany apparently did not intend to take any active part in the work of reorganisation. For the present it had been decided that those western portions of the vilayets of Nossovo and Monastir should be excluded from the scheme which contained a preponderating element of Albanians. The areas to be assigned to the various Powers had not yet been determined. The Government were anxious that the scheme should be put into working order as soon as possible, and he did not think that they could have given a better proof of their disinterestedness in the matter than by saying that they were willing to waive their own personal convenience and to fall in with any arrangement which might commend itself to the other Powers, or, if that solution were preferred, to decide the distribution of areas by the rough and ready but practical expedient of drawing lots. The Government intended to send the officers from this country to join the Italian general at Salonika as soon as he left Constantinople, and he had heard that day that the idea was that the general should leave Constantinople next week.

It was true that the appointment of the civil assessors had not, as far as he knew, been accompanied by any fundamental change in the internal administration of the country at present. They had been engaged for some weeks past in elaborating the details of the scheme of administrative reforms, and the Government hoped that this task was nearing its completion and that the assessors would be in a position to undertake those tours of inquiry which would satisfy the local population of their desire not to rely merely upon hearsay, but to acquaint themselves by personal investigation with the conditions of the problem which they were expected to solve. They would also be entrusted with the supervision of the distribution of relief, and he could not say that the information which he had received altogether bore out the statement of the right hon. Gentleman that the Turkish Government had been throwing great difficulties in the way of the distribution of relief and in the management of hospitals. He would be glad if the right hon. Gentleman would communicate any information of that kind he received. On one or two occasions the Government had brought complaints to the notice of the Ambassador for inquiry, but the conditions of affairs in the area of relief distribution appeared to be much more satisfactory and the population not nearly so destitute as was at one time believed. It was probable that they would be able to tide over, without any serious risk of famine, the few months that intervened before the reaping of the harvest, and there seemed to be a general inclination to rely upon the assurances and sincerity of the European Powers instead of exposing themselves once more needlessly to the perils and sufferings of a perfectly useless struggle. That fact threw additional responsibility on the European Powers to show that they were worthy of confidence. It was a responsibility of which His Majesty's Government were deeply sensible; and they would continue in the future, as in the past, relying on the support of all sections of the House and on the opinion of the country, to do their utmost to discharge.

MR. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland) said there was another subject which he wished to bring before the House. He meant the mission to Tibet. The expeditionary force into Tibet, or the Political mission as it was called, had been stationary for some months, but apparently it was about to move forward, and as far as could be seen there was likely to be opposition on the part of the Tibetans. Although there was not much danger of the expedition being in any way defeated, it became the duty of the House to consider the reason why we were moving forward in this *quasi*-military manner. They had never had any explicit statement of the reasons why the mission was going forward at all. He approached the matter to a certain extent in a spirit of inquiry. There had been a debate in another place, and, in answer to a series of Questions, a catalogue was given of small incidents and annoyances on the borders, and these were given as a reason for intervention. Lord Hardwicke on that occasion said that the Tibetans were doing their best to thwart trade with us, and he gave somewhat humorous instances of that. One was, that they built a wall of protection round a town in order to prevent their own traders coming out and doing business with British traders. He thought he could convince the House that that reason was very slightly grounded. If they looked at the record of trade with Tibet it would be seen that that trade had steadily risen on both sides. The exports from Tibet rose from seven lakhs of rupees in 1890, to fourteen in 1894, and nineteen in 1902. The exports from British India to Tibet rose from four lakhs of rupees in 1890 to nine lakhs in 1897, and eleven lakhs in 1902. Therefore, although the trade was not increasing with great rapidity, they could put aside the idea that our trade was being ruined. Another reason given for the expedition was that the Tibetans were removing boundary pillars between Tibet and our territory. These pillars were in a country without a population, and at an altitude as high as Mont Blanc where, he should say, the competition for land was not of great importance. Another allegation was that two British subjects who had gone into Tibet had been arrested and not given up. These were the only specific cases ever submitted to Parliament or this country on which it was alleged the mission was necessary. There was, it was true, an objection to the Tibetan policy of isolation. It was true that there was a Government there who would not deal with the British Government; but, surely, that was hardly worth making an invasion for.

It seemed as if this enterprise was the result of a morbid curiosity on the part of Lord Curzon to get to Lhasa, in order to find out the inner working of the strange State religion of Tibet. He supposed, however, they were expected to believe that the real reason was the old bugbear of Russia. He would not argue the general question of Russia's intention towards India, but he would point out that, of all the causes of fear of Russia, this was the least that had ever occurred in the history of England. There was a report of Russian envoys going to Lhasa, and that this Government asked the Russian Government what it meant. All that Lord Lansdowne could say in regard to that in the House of Lords was that it was not what the Russians had done, but what the Tibetans imagined they would do, which had given rise to these reports; and that he gave no credence to the rumours. Lord Lansdowne accepted the words of Count Benckendorff that there was no convention either with Tibet or China, nor anyone else in regard to Tibet, nor had the Russian Government any agent in Tibet nor had they any intention of sending an agent there. Lhasa was 1,200 miles from Yarkand, and 700 miles from the boundary of Eastern Turkestan. The intervening district was a high, wild, desert, unpopulated country, over which the Russians would have to march if they thought of approaching India in that way. It seemed a very strong measure, with this small evidence of Russia's intention, and this immense territory that the Russians would have to traverse, to send an armed force into this harmless country. And what effect would it have on Russia, if any? It was obviously, if anything, a challenge to her, an irritant, an attempt to steal a march upon her, just at the moment that she was engaged elsewhere. It would simply create hostility in Russia where none existed previously. If we were to interfere anywhere whilst Russia was occupied in the Far East, we might as well interfere in Macedonia. The speech they had just listened to from the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs was not particularly hopeful. The noble Lord talked of England taking a strong line in the future, but that they must have consideration for the susceptibilities of the Porte. He did not think that that indicated to the Porte, or anyone else, that there was much chance of England intervening. Besides, the Porte knew that, whatever the intentions of Russia might be, she was unable to intervene in Macedonia during the complications in the Far East. It was time for England, he insisted, to take the lead once more in the Near East. It would be much better to do that than embark in a new war in a country with which we had nothing to do and in order merely to satisfy a morbid curiosty.

MR. JOSEPH DEVLIN (Kilkenny, N.) said that although neither the Chief Secretary nor the Attorney-General for Ireland were in their places, he wished to take the opportunity of raising the question of transit between the Castlecomer Collieries and Kilkenny. They had heard a great deal from a member of the Government of the need of the Irish people doing something for their own industries instead of continually appealing to the Government for support. Now, in these Castlecomer Collieries there was a proof of the anxiety of the people of Ireland to do something for themselves; but the Government had neither directly nor indirectly used its influence with the large railway companies in Ireland to facilitate the transit of the coal from these collieries to other parts of Ireland, although the development of these mines was of the greatest importance, not only to the people of the district, but to the whole South of Ireland. No less than 80,000 tons of coal were raised from the mines every year—coal which had been found superior to Welsh coal—and at present there were 100 people employed. The cost of carriage for the eight miles to the nearest station was 6s. 8d. per ton, which, added to the cost of production, made it impossible to compete with the Welsh coal in the market. It was a perfect scandal that it should cost less to bring coal from Swansea in Wales to Cork, than from Castlecomer to Kilkenny, a distance of only eight miles. In 1801 a grant of £40,000 was made by the Board of Inland Navigation for the purpose of constructing a canal for the development of these mines; but not a single farthing of that money had ever been spent. He was entitled to ask the Government what had been done with that £40,000. The population of the district of Castlecomer had been going down considerably for thirty years, and he thought that the Government should take some steps to encourage this great industry and restore the population to the district. They had recently had a discussion on the expedition to Somaliland which cost £400,000, and could not the Chief Secretary offer some encouragement to the people to maintain an industry in a land where industries had practically disappeared. The right hon. Gentleman might say that he could not compel the Treasury to listen to claims of that character, which he admitted were just, but he (Mr. Devlin) could not understand that plea because he knew perfectly well that the Chief Secretary was the most suave and eloquent rhetorician in that House, and whether it was on questions of fiscal policy, Chinese labour, or the war in South Africa, the right hon. Gentleman was requisitioned to defend the Government. Surely some of that rhetoric and suavity might be exercised by the right hon. Gentleman in the Cabinet on behalf of Ireland and its resources. It was a perfect scandal that these industries should be left in their present condition for lack of the necessary facilities of transport, and he appealed to the Chief Secretary to use his influence with the Great Southern and Western Railway to facilitate the delivery of the consignments from the colleries of Castlecomer.

*MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, East Toxteth) said he desired to call the attention of the Secretary to the Colonies to a matter not in connection with the much debated question of Chinese labour, but to the supply of stores and materials for the public departments of the Transvaal. That was a subject not unworthy of the attention of the House, because, if those colonies were to be a success, it was essential that the stores and materials supplied to their public departments should be bought in the cheapest market and of the best quality. In the time of the late Mr. Kruger—he meant in the time of the late President Kruger—these colonies were free to buy as they liked, and the House knew to its cost that their purchases were extremely efficient and as good as could be purchased by this country. Under the existing system the Transvaal was obliged to buy all its stores and materials for the public departments from the Crown Agents, and he thought it was not a waste of time to inquire whether through these Crown Agents they were obtaining stores and materials on the most economical terms. The Crown Agents were no doubt most estimable gentlemen. They had an office in Tokenhouse Yard for a staff that dealt with stores and materials for forty-four colonies and protectorates forming the whole of the British Empire outside India and the self-governing Colonies. Take the case of railways. In 1901 the railways in the Transvaal had a voice in the management of their own concerns, and bought their own stores and materials, but now they were under strict regulations to buy their stores and materials through the Crown Agents, and were not allowed to purchase, even locally, anything that could be procured through the Agents in London. He wished to ask whether any complaint had been received respecting the stores and materials that had been furnished to the public departments, and more particularly to the railways of the Transvaal, through these Crown Agents. The Secretary to the Colonies had recently issued a Paper marked Cd. 1944 defining the duties and *status* of these Crown Agents. It might surprise the House to know that this was the first document for nearly a quarter of a century that had been issued from the Colonial Office defining the duties and position of Crown Agents. A great deal had happened during the last quarter of a century. In 1881 a Paper was issued dealing with the duties of Crown Agents and after the lapse of so long a time the curtain had been again lifted upon a system which controlled the whole commercial and financial business of the public departments of no less than forty-four colonies and protectorates of the British Empire, to which the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony had now been added.

The transactions carried through by these three gentlemen were understood to be very large indeed. He did not possess the exact figures, but he believed that in 1903 they handled a sum not very much inferior in magnitude to the sum handled by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the United Kingdom. In fact, he understood that little short of £100,000,000 passed through the hands of these Agents over whose business and administration the House of Commons had no control whatever, and as to the commissions they received, the House had no exact knowledge. They had handled the Transvaal loan of £30,000,000 in 1903, which had already been discussed in the House. He understood that the Crown Agents wanted to have the floating of that loan, but that the late Chancellor of the Exchequer put down his foot and would not allow it; but all the same, in their accounts for 1903, they did operate this loan in some connection, and he desired to ask whether they received any commission on that loan of £30,000,000, and more particularly whether they charged the scale of commission that they were entitled to charge upon all financial business. They were entitled to charge a commission of ½ per cent. on the issue and repayment of a loan and ¼ per cent. on the payment of interest. He would like to know whether that commission of ½ per cent. was charged because it would represent £150,000, and he would further like to know whether they were entitled to charge the ¼ per cent. on the interest.

Then he wanted to ask a few questions about West Africa. He understood that the price of coal charged for the Lagos Railway in 1902 was £2 10s. per ton. The best South Wales coal could be bought in this country for 15s. per ton. The freight to West Africa under ordinary circumstances would not exceed 15s., which would make £1 10s. per ton, and he was at a loss to account for the extra £1 which brought the price up to £2 10s. per ton—a price against which the railway lodged a complaint, with the result that in 1903, as he understood from the right hon. Gentleman, they were allowed to buy the coal direct. Yet it was laid down that nothing should be bought locally by a department or by any public works administration that could be bought in this country, and surely if there was one article more than another that could be bought cheaply in England it was coal, the price of which was cut finer than any article except, perhaps, cotton or coffee. Peculiar importance was attached at the present moment to transport in West Africa, because efforts were being made to stimulate the growing of cotton in the British Empire. It was all very well for Manchester and Liverpool to exert themselves over the question of the growing of cotton in the British Empire, but he was inclined to think that the true need of the moment was not so much the growing of cotton as its transport, from the interior to the coast of West Africa, and that could only be brought about by the rapid construction of railways especially adapted to the country, which could be laid down economically, with a minimum of delay, and would carry at such rates of freights as to encourage rather than discourage those who desired to supply this country with cotton. He trusted that this question of transport between Nigeria and the coast would be dealt with on the lines of modern enterprise, and not in an atmosphere of officialism and red tape, and if it were found that the system of the Crown Agents was expensive and dilatory, he hoped the Colonial Secretary would have the courage to set it aside.

The whole question was really one which could be called "Tied-house Imperialism." The Colonies were compelled to come to this country for the whole of their stores and materials for their public works, whether telegraphs, railways, bridges, iron, piping, or electrical appliances. The result of that system might be either good or bad, but he was inclined to think that as it was quite outside the purview of the House of Commons it was desirable that it should enlist a little more attention. What was the possible result of the prohibition to purchase stores locally? If British makers who were represented in British colonies were debarred from obtaining orders for Government work on the spot, they were at a disadvantage as compared with their foreign competitors. A pushing firm in England desiring to open a branch house at Colombo or Singapore would know that it stood no chance of getting a share of the Government work because it was part of the system that all orders must be given to the Crown Agents in England. The people in the Malay States requiring lubricating oil had made local contracts, although there was an English company ready to do business with them but was debarred from so doing.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: The American companies give better terms. I am sure the hon. Gentleman will be glad to hear the reason why these contracts are given to the American Standard Oil Company is because that company gives better terms. He will find that that company has many contracts in this country.

***Mr. AUSTIN TAYLOR** did not understand what the hon. Gentleman meant by better terms, seeing that all orders had to come through the Crown Agents and no opportunity was given to place them elsewhere. He thought the right hon. Gentleman might in his reply deal with the question whether these colonies and protectorates were being supplied as efficiently and economically by the Crown Agents as they might be under a more elastic system of open competition. It was to him a matter of surprise that these gentlemen should be operating enormous sums year after year entirely outside the purview of the House of Commons, and without any means being afforded for having a discussion on their accounts year by year. Although their accounts were audited by the Accountant-General they were not laid on the Table of the House, and if in that House they were to think Imperially they might turn their attention to prosaic duties of the nature he now indicated.

MR. HARRIS (Tynemouth) said the Crown Agents were engaged in transactions which involved the receipt and payment of stupendous sums of money; they enjoyed unlimited powers, and were quite beyond the control of the Colonial Secretary; they owned no responsibility either to the House of Commons or to the Legislative Assemblies of the colonies, who were forced to employ their services. He understood that the financial transactions of the Crown Agents for the Colonies in recent years amounted to no less than the combined Estimates for the Army and Navy, and yet in spite of that fact neither the salaries of the officials nor their transactions were submitted to Parliament for criticism and review. Those gentlemen had the exclusive privilege of purchasing s ores and materials for forty-four colonies and protectorates and for the construction of railways in Africa. The strangest part of the business was that hardly a transaction was carried through between this country and the Crown Colonies on which the Crown Agents did not in some way or other get a commission. When we lent £35,000,000 to the Transvaal they got a commission on both the loan and the interest, while in regard to railway construction in South Africa, the Crown Agents got a commission on all purchases of bridges and of stock. Further than that, they charged commission on all investments by the Colonies of their surplus funds. The late Colonial Secretary stated, in answer to a Question by the hon. Member for Chesterfield, that in 1901 £80,000 was paid to them in commission. This money, however, did not go into the pockets of the Crown Agents but was, he believed, invested to make up deficiencies on previous years and to allow of pensions being paid to those who had served in the office. He had, therefore, no complaint to make against the gentlemen who now held these offices; their character was absolutely unimpeachable and beyond suspicion, but he would remind the House that complaints were constantly being made both by private firms in this country and by the Colonies that their interests were being treated in a way that they considered unfair. There was one complaint which was being constantly made. He found, on referring to the Report of the Special Commission which sat on Civil Establishments in 1888, it was laid down that no permanent officer on the establishment was to be permitted to take part in the management of any insurance company or any trading or financial company. This condition must either have been broken or rescinded, for one of these gentlemen was a director of the London Assurance Company, which enjoyed practically the whole of the insurance business passing through the hands of the Crown Agents. This business had represented many hundreds of thousands of pounds in recent years. It might, indeed, be useful that the Colonial Office should be represented on the board of that company, and he did not suggest that there was anything in this that was not *bonâ fide*, but it seemed to him unfortunate that a gentleman should occupy the dual position of Crown Agent, having the control of all this insurance business, and at the same time sit as director on the board of the Company which got the business. It led, at any rate, to a great deal of scandal and gossip, which in this case, no doubt, was absolutely unfounded, but which at the same time was natural and excusable. This was to his mind an opportune time for securing that the responsibilities of Parliament should be made less indirect and less vague in regard to the relations between the Crown Agents for the Colonies and His Majesty's Government. He would urge the right hon. Gentleman to consider the advisability of the appointment of a Committee to consider the whole subject, or else that his right hon. friend the Colonial Secretary should look into the constitution and management of the office of the Crown Agents with the thoroughness which characterised all his actions. That would, he was sure, satisfy the House.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said he was well aware that the Crown Agents themselves had no direct pecuniary interest in these contracts, as they were paid fixed salaries, but he was bound to admit that too much mystery surrounded the Crown Agents' Office, which ought to be dissolved by some form of inquiry. Two complaints were advanced against the Crown Agents. One was that they were allowed to spend large sums of public money without any control, and the other was that they were dilatory, unbusinesslike, and expensive in their operations. It was also urged that the system under which orders had necessarily to be placed in this country, did a great deal to discourage local enterprise. These two complaints entitled them to demand a Committee of Inquiry, not into the probity or *bonâ fides* of the Crown Agents, but as to whether that office could not be placed on a more business-like footing. It seemed absolutely essential to have an immediate inquiry into the position of the Crown Agents. What had made the Civil Service such as it was? It was beyond fear and reproach because there was no suspicion that our public officials had any personal interest in the business which they transacted. Now the House were told that the chief Crown Agent, Sir Edward Blake, was a director of a public company doing business with the Crown Agents. Surely it was the duty of the Colonial Secretary to sever that connection at once, for obviously it was not a proper position for the head of a public department handling many millions of money during the year. The time had arrived when a Committee of this House should inquire into the functions of the Crown Agents and see whether they could not be put on a better basis, affording greater publicity, and getting rid of scandal if it existed.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. LYTTELTON, Warwick and Leamington) said that the basis upon which the operations of the Crown Agents were conducted, and which hitherto had been supported by both Parties in the State, was that it was desirable that the Crown Colonies should have agents in this country, and that their interests were best served by having agents who would deal for all the Crown Colonies together. This system undoubtedly possessed great merits, although naturally it was open to some criticism. The Crown Agents had an immense area to operate upon and immense credit at their command. They had great experience, they conducted their operations for a very low commission indeed, and the result was that they were able to command a vast quantity of business and dealt with the very best possible manufacturers of this and other kingdoms. Any dereliction on the part of manufacturers could at once be visited severely by striking them off the Crown Agents' list, with the result that they got no further share in what was undoubtedly a very fine business. Moreover, very great disadvantages were obviated in the Crown Colonies themselves. A great many of the Crown Colonies were not producers of the articles which they found it necessary to obtain, and they sent the order to the Agents, who at once procured the required articles from the widest market at the lowest possible price, they having the command of the market. If a Crown Colony were left to itself to order its own commodities there was a very great temptation. Local manufacturers were not on the spot, but agents and travellers from all over the world went to the Colonies, and a very great temptation was offered in the form of commissions to those who were dealing with these matters in the Crown Colonies. He dared say they could resist that temptation, but it was temptation, and it was very desirable that it should not be offered. His hon. friend was incorrect in saying that the system was a discouragement to local production.

Mr. AUSTIN TAYLOR: I did not say that; my point was that it was a discouragement to British firms to open agencies for the sale of their goods in these colonies.

*Mr. LYTTELTON said these agencies needed to be remunerative and they could not, therefore, do the work for the 1 per cent. which the Crown Agents received. The general theory of the system was that in the Crown Agents they had a very large and experienced firm at home, not dependent on orders, but paid by a moderate and fixed salary. The salary of the senior Crown Agent was only £2,500 a year. This general system, which every Party in the State had approved for many years, was one in the interests, broadly speaking, of the Colonies. They obtained their goods more cheaply and of better quality; they, in fact, obtained the best treatment. The remuneration of the Agents was of a very moderate character. The scale of charges laid down was a uniform commission of 1 per cent. on all stores, and on loans, ½ per cent. on the issue and ¼ per cent. on the repayment of interest. It was true that this amounted to a very large sum in the case of the Transvaal loan, but that was a very exceptional transaction, and he did not think that the Crown Agents had ever before had to raise a loan exceeding £5,000,000. These charges were the only source of income received by the Crown Agents' Office. The office expenses were paid out of the commissions, and the balance was carried to a reserve fund, out of which losses, if they occurred, were made good. Admitting that there might be something in the point raised by the hon. Member for Poplar that there should be more control, if possible, he submitted that they got, in the present system, a very great service performed for the Crown Colonies at a very moderate charge indeed, more moderate than if private agents were employed, and they had also the benefit of immense experience placed at the service of the Crown Colonies. His right hon. friend the Member for West Birmingham had made an elaborate inquiry into this whole question, with the result that he found the complaints of the system were very few, and his general conclusion was that it was a good system and not to be disturbed. Whatever the House might think of some opinions of his right hon. friend, all would probably agree that few men had more knowledge and more acute perception of business matters than he. Special reference had been made to the charge for coal for the Lagos Railway, but that, he believed, was bought locally, and the Crown Agents were not responsible for it. With regard to the necessity, in West Africa, of transport for the benefit of the cotton industry, he pointed out that the moment was not very favourable for additional financial operations. Complaint had been made of the expensive character of the railways constructed in South Africa, but the choice had to be made between laying down lines which would require to be renewed in a few years or having them so constructed as to avoid the necessity for such renewal. He was not aware that any of the Crown Agents were directors of any company, and he did not know what the practice was. He was sorry that his hon. friend had brought this matter forward without acquainting him beforehand, but obviously it would not be right that, in a personal matter and without notice, he should say a word with reference to it without having seen the gentleman concerned.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) called attention to the Provostship of Trinity College and felt obliged to say that the right hon. Gentleman had given improper advice to the King in regard to the appointment of Dr. Traill. He had given notice of this Question, and he trusted that the Minister concerned would be sent for, and that the right hon. Gentleman would do him the honour of coming into the House. They had no concern with the dispensation of patronage generally but the Provost of Trinity College was in a somewhat different position. He thought the Prime Minister, in regard to this question, had given improper advice to His Majesty the King by the appointment of Dr. Traill, having regard to the state of the Irish University question at the present time, and the great desire that it should be settled on the most amicable basis; and he thought that it was a mistake to appoint to one of the greatest academic prizes in Europe a gentleman who was against the recognition of Roman Catholic rights, who was the champion on the landlord side in the land war, who was a politician first and a scholar afterwards. The salary was something like £4,500 a year and the house attached to the Provostship was one of the most beautiful palaces in Europe. This appointment was generally given as a reward of merit and not for political services. The gentleman who was placed at the head of Trinity College must necessarily have a very commanding and influential vote in every matter affecting Irish University education. It was therefore an imperative obligation upon the Prime Minister, who was a pretended advocate of the extension of university education to Catholics, that he should not put in that position a man who was a bitter antagonist of Catholic rights and privileges and of popular rights and privileges in Ireland. Dr. Traill was as much a Party politician as he was himself, and he was certainly the last person who should have been chosen for the head of a college devoted to learning and intellectual achievement. When by means of a Question he asked the Prime Minister upon whose advice this appointment had been made the right hon. Gentleman declared that it was on his own advice, but he did not think it proper at the time to give the reasons why he gave such advice. The appointment was calculated to exasperate religious difficulties in Ireland and to retard instead of settling on an amicable basis the important University question. Having regard to the deleterious results of the appointment, he declared it to be perhaps the most pernicious which had been made since the Union, and certainly since the appointment of Judge Keogh in 1857. In the past the Provostship of Trinity College had always been considered a reward of merit, and it was a very sad thing that the appointment should now have been given to a Party hack. The right hon. Gentleman had no doubt seen the statue to Edmund Burke at Trinity College. The other day he came across a letter written by Burke to the Prime Minister at a time when there was a vacancy in the Provostship of Trinity College, Dublin, and he characterised the appointment of the Provost in a way in which he would not venture to characterise the appointment of Dr. Traill. Burke called it "a shameful job," and he said it ought not to be considered a thing of promiscuous patronage which might as well be given to one man as another.

He wished to say nothing in disparagement of Dr. Traill beyond saying that his qualifications were not such as fitted him for the post to which he had been appointed. He was not distinguished in the world of letters, he had taken a fellowship, but he had never occupied a professorial chair, and as *The Times* said of him: "He had not secured and did not claim eminence as a scholar." That was the gentleman who had been placed at the head of a great university with its great influence on the educational system of Ireland. The Prime Minister had said that he was responsible for the appointment, but apparently he was not very well versed in constitutional usage. This appointment was not actually in the right hon. Gentleman's gift, but it was the gift of the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and therefore the person responsible was not the Prime Minister but the Chief Secretary for Ireland, who would not have appointed Dr. Traill. But Dr. Traill had taken a keen interest in land legislation, he had an estate in Ulster, he was a member of the Committee of the Landowners' Convention, and he was an Orangeman. The right hon. Gentleman said he wearied of details, but there was one detail which he would not weary of, and perhaps he would recollect the celebrated battering-ram which was given to the Irish police during the time he was Chief Secretary for Ireland, and which was designed by a Committee of which Dr. Traill was a member. Was that a qualification for a gentleman at the head of a great educational institution? Dr. Traill had met his hon. friend the Member for South Tyrone in the land war, and he had fought in the land Courts with great persistency. Such things were not qualifications for the headship of a great university, Dr. Traill sat on the Fry Land Commission, not in the interests of the tenants, but in the interests of the landlords, and therefore he was not the man for such a post, where he would have great influence over the educational system, and his appointment would retard the movement for extending university education among all classes in Ireland. Dr. Traill was not a great scholar, but he was a good Orangeman. Had this appointment been given as a sop to the Orange Members, to whom Dr. Traill and his friends wrote canvassing for the appointment? If the Prime Minister had taken the advice of the Chief Secretary another appointment would have been made. The right hon. Gentleman's correspondence was very extensive, and no doubt he had had some letters from very influential persons urging him to make this appointment. *The Times* had said that Dr. Traill was not a contributor to the world of letters. He pointed out as a suggestive fact that the appointment of Dr. Traill was not announced until half an hour after the poll, in the recent election in Dublin, closed. The fear was that if announced before the poll closed the Government would lose many respectable voters. Outside persons who were engaged in active political life, Dr. Traill's name was utterly unknown, and by his appointment grave injustice had been done. There was a gentleman whose name the mere mention of Trinity College suggested. That gentleman was a distinguished scholar, but he was disqualified because, although a strong Protestant, he wished to extend the rights and blessings of university education to Irish Catholics. For that reason he had been kept out of Trinity College. The First Lord of the Treasury was the last person who should have appointed Dr. Traill, and that appointment had not been received with favour in Trinity College.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (MR. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): The hon. Gentleman appears to have supposed that, in objecting to his raising the question of the advice that I thought it was my duty to give in reference to the appointment to Trinity College, I objected to its being brought before Parliament. That is not the case.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL said what the right hon. Gentleman objected to was that he should be asked for his reasons for that advice.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: When it comes to personal claims, and rival personal claims, it probably is not expedient that the House should devote much of its time to such a discussion. But as the hon. Gentleman has thought fit to raise the question, I will endeavour very briefly to deal with the speech which he has just delivered. I may say at once that there has happened to me upon this occasion what does not always happen to me when I listen to the hon. Gentleman — I have learned a great deal from his speech which I did not know before. It never occurred to me until the hon. Gentleman informed me that Dr. Traill's appointment was due to his having been what the hon. Gentleman described as a Party hack, or that he merited the appointment by being a member of the Landlords' Convention and serving on the Fry Commission. In these various capacities —all useful in their way— Dr. Traill may have earned the gratitude of this or that section of the community, but not one of these considerations entered into my mind even for a moment when I was considering the propriety of recommending him for the appointment to Trinity College. And I may say, though the hon. Gentleman will hardly believe it—

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I will believe anything.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Then I proceed with the greater confidence to inform the hon. Gentleman that even the battering-ram which was designed, as I understand him, by the Landlords' Convention of which Dr. Traill was a member—even the invention of that interesting implement of agrarian warfare was not present to my mind when I was dealing with the large correspondence which this appointment entailed upon me, or when I was considering what decision it was my duty to come to upon this subject. It may be that Dr. Traill was the actual designer of the instrument in question, but until to-night I never heard a suggestion on that point. And though he is a distinguished mathematician, and though I know as a fact that he has, by his personal exertions, established a great engineering school in Trinity College, Dublin, I am not aware that the efforts either of that school, or of any of the pupils in it, were devoted to designing the most efficient method of providing a battering-ram by which the operations of the law might be expedited.

The hon. Gentleman, having given this narrative of the qualifications, as he conceived them, of Dr. Traill, proceeded to give us an enumeration of the disqualifications which he thought Dr. Traill possessed. He said, in the first place, that Dr. Traill's appointment threw back the cause of general university education in Ireland, for which, he was good enough to observe, I was a pretended advocate. If I am only a pretended advocate of the extension of university education in Ireland, my fate is indeed a hard one; for I have certainly quarrelled with a great many of my English friends over the subject, and I do not appear to have made friends with the Gentlemen whose interests are primarily concerned. I am sorry that so unhappy a result should attend all my efforts, which, according to the hon. Gentleman, were only pretended at the best, and I suppose now vanished altogether. My desire to see university education extended to the great body of the Irish people has suffered no diminution either by the lapse of time or by personal defections; but I am utterly at a loss to understand how the appointment of Dr. Traill to the headship of what is at the present one of the places, no doubt by far the most distinguished, in which university education is given in Ireland, militates against the establishment of other institutions in which the same university education can be given. I do not know—I have not thought it my business to inquire—but it may be that Dr. Traill does not take the same view that I take of the necessity for extending University education in Ireland. I have never asked whether he agreed with me in that or in any other opinion. But let us grant that he differs from me. I wholly fail to see how it is in his power to retard for one instant any decision which this House or any other body competent to deal with the matter may arrive at in connection with that great question. Dr. Traill, no doubt, as Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, will have great influence over that college, which is now, and has for years been, open to students of all denominations. But unless the hon. Gentleman anticipates that the problem of university education in Ireland is to be solved by entirely changing the character of Trinity College, Dublin, and making that the actual organ of education, I fail to understand how the fact that a gentleman of Dr. Traill's opinions, whatever they may be—how his appointment to the headship of that college can affect either for good or evil the general course of the controversy which has so long raged on this question. The other disqualifications which the hon. Gentleman finds in Dr. Traill I do not think I need refer to. He read a long extract from a correspondence with a learned Judge, of the merits of which I know nothing. But I did not understand that it was on the merits of the controversy between Dr. Traill and the learned Judge that the hon. Member was exercised. It was that in the final sentence of Dr. Traill's letter he said "hung" when he should have said "hanged." I do not pronounce on the delicate question of English raised by the hon. Gentleman. But supposing that Dr. Traill did say "hung" when he should have said "hanged"—a fault to which I am myself liable—I could point out in Dr. Traill's excuse that his academic distinction was mathematical and not linguistic, and, however inadmissible it may be to a great classical scholar to say "hung" when he should have said "hanged," a distinguished mathematician may be permitted a lapse of that character.

My only other observation is this. The hon. Gentleman has indicated that in his opinion the appointment of Dr. Traill belongs to the same class as those appointments which in the eighteenth century were the scandal of Irish government. It is perfectly notorious that all through that century, after Grattan's Parliament was established, as well as before it, political appointments were made which did very little credit, I will not say to the individuals, but to the system under which they were made.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL said that Dr. Traill was the thirty-sixth Provost of the college since its foundation, and, with one exception of a Provost who was appointed before 1782, every appointment had been desirable.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not compete with the hon. Gentleman in knowledge of the long series of doubtless distinguished men who have filled the office of Provost of Trinity College. His opinion, so I gather from his speech, is that no man should be appointed to Trinity College unless he has written some work of European fame. I do not for a moment doubt that the works of European fame by the thirty-five predecessors of Dr. Traill exist, or that the hon. Gentleman is prepared to tell us, having studied those works, that they all deserved their appointments. My knowledge is incomparably less than that of the hon. Gentleman, but I really am not sure that, except the works of the late Dr. Salmon, I remember having read the works of any of the previous Provosts, though doubtless they exist.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Have you ever heard of Bishop Bethell?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have not read his works, doubtless the hon. Gentleman has. But, at all events, however eminent that particular ecclesiastic may have been, I have not got to consider that point; but Dr. Traill's qualifications for the position which I have recommended. Dr. Traill has devoted long years of energetic labour to the interests of the College he represents, he has worked actively and strenuously in its interests; and, so far as I was able to discover during the not restricted correspondence which I had on the subject, his was the appointment which would give most satisfaction to the graduates of Trinity College, not including the hon Gentleman—I am not sure whether he is or is not a graduate.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: No, I have not the honour.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I thought from the enthusiasm with which the hon. Gentleman spoke that he was.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: I spent one happy year of my life there, and I have been one of the examiners.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I admit that one year is not a long academic career, though it may leave most pleasant recollections behind it. But, after all, the duty of the adviser to the Crown must include the consideration of the feelings, opinions, and wishes of those over whom the Provost of the College is appointed to preside. I do not say or think that that should be the solitary consideration, I do not say or think that an unworthy candidate, however popular, ought to be appointed; but when I find, as I did find in this case, or believed myself to find, that there was a strong trend of Trinity College opinion in favour of Dr. Traill, I felt that that was a most weighty consideration, and one that it was impossible for me to neglect. I think it would be improper if I were to go further into this matter; nobody who knows Dr. Traill doubts, whether he may say "hung" or "hanged," that he is an extremely able administrator, nobody will deny that in dealing with the business of this great institution he possesses, and is likely to continue to possess, the confidence of those whose interests he serves. Whether those be or be not adequate reasons for his appointment, I think the House at large, and even the hon. Gentleman himself, will admit that the reasons, adequate or inadequate, are at least not unworthy.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

TELEGRAPH (MONEY) BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time To-morrow.

Adjourned at ten minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 29th March, 1904.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—Gomersal Gas; Bexhill Water and Gas; Torquay Tramways; Great Eastern Railway. The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Littlestone-on-Sea and District Water Bill. Read 2ª, and committed.

Elysée Palace Hotel Company Bill [H.L.]; Milwr and District Mines Drainage Bill [H.L.]. Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Bridlington Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Bristol Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Ebbw Vale Urban District Water Bill [H.L.]; Harrogate Waterworks Tramroads Bill [H.L.]; Leeds Corporation (Waterworks) Railway Bill [H.L.]; Llanelly Harbour Bill [H.L.]; Belfast Corporation (Tramways) Bill [H.L.]; Holywood Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Metropolitan District Railway Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Marquess of Bath be proposed to the House as a Member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Earl of Craven; read, and agreed to.

Telegraph (Money) Bill. Brought from the Commons.

Bishop's Stortford and District Gas Bill; Great Central and Midland Joint Railways Bill. Brought from the Commons; read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners.

Sutton Gas Bill; Croydon Gas Bill; Great Northern Railway Bill; London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway Bill; Ryde Gas Bill. Brought from the Commons; read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

PETITION.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES (METRIC SYSTEM) BILL [H.L.].

Petition in favour of; of Hammersmith Corporation; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE REPORTS: ANNUAL SERIES.

No. 3133. United States (Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky). No. 3134. Peru (Iquitos).

NATIONAL GALLERY, ETC. (SCOTLAND)

Tenth Annual Report to the Secretary for Scotland by the Commissioners and Trustees of the Board of Manufactures in Scotland, for the year ended 30th September, 1903.

POLICE (SCOTLAND).

Forty-sixth Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland, for the year ended 31st December, 1903.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.

Annual report of proceedings under the Tithe Acts, 1836 to 1891, the Copyhold Act, 1894, the Inclosure Acts, 1845 to 1899, the Agricultural Holdings Acts, 1883 to 1900, the Drainage and Improvement of Land Acts, the Universities and College Estates Acts, 1858 to 1898, the Glebe Lands Act, 1888, etc., etc., for the year 1903. Annual reports of proceedings under the Diseases of Animals Acts, the Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Acts, etc., etc., for the year 1903.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF YORK, WEST RIDING).

Order made by the County Council of the West Riding of the county of York, altering certain polling districts in the Osgoldcross, Skipton, and Barnsley Parliamentary divisions. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Standing Order No. XXXIX. considered (according to order), and suspended for this day's sitting.

TELEGRAPH (MONEY) BILL.

Read 1ª; Then (Standing Order No. XXXIX. having been suspended) Bill read 2ª (The Earl Waldegrave); Committee negatived; Bill read 3ª, and passed.

COMMISSION.

The following Bills received the Royal Assent:

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 1).
2. Telegraph (Money).
3. Metropolitan Improvements (Funds).
4. Dumbarton Tramways Order Confirmation.
5. Kilmarnock Corporation Order Confirmation.

House adjourned at a quarter past Four o'clock, to Tuesday the 19th of April next, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 29th March, 1904.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz.:—Harlow and Sawbridgeworth Gas Bill [Lords]. Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

Croydon Gas Bill; Great Northern Railway Bill; London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway Bill; Ryde Gas Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

St. Marylebone Electric Lighting Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Weston-super-Mare Grand Pier Bill [Lords]. Read a second time, and committed.

PRIVATE BILL, ETC.

Ordered, That Standing Orders 39, 128, and 230 be suspended, and that the time for depositing Petitions and Memorials against Private Bills, or against any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate, and for depositing duplicates of any Documents relating to any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate, also for depositing at the Private Bill Office all Documents relating to any Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the Recess.—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means.*)

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to enable the Elysée Palace Hotel Company, Limited, to issue paid up ordinary shares in satisfaction of the deferred shares; to provide for the extinction of such deferred shares; and for other purposes." [Elysée Palace Hotel Company Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled. "An Act to effect the drainage of certain mines and mineral lands in the county of Flint; and for other purposes." [Milwr and District Mines Drainage Bill [Lords.]

Elysée Palace Hotel Company Bill [Lords]; Milwr and District Mines Drainage Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTIONS (HOURS OF POLLING).

Petitions for legislation: from Bermondsey; and St. Pancras; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSED PREMISES (HOURS OF CLOSING).

Petition from St. Pancras, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

LICENCES (RENEWAL).

Petitions against alteration of Law: from Bristol; Ponders End; Staines; Heaton; Armley (two); Mirfield; Morriston; Loddiswell; Thorpe Hesley; Chichester; Oakenholt; Mold; Dyserth; Bagillt; Rhosesmor; Greenfield; Pentre Halkin; Rishton; Hull; Cheltenham; Sheffield; and Thorganby and West Collingwith; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES BILL.

Petition from Aberdeen, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Horncastle; and Colchester; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

POLICE (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Forty-sixth Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland for the year ended 31st December, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

NATIONAL GALLERY, ETC. (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Tenth Annual Report to the Secretary for Scotland by the Commissioners and Trustees of the Board of Manufactures in Scotland, being for the year ending 30th September, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

POOR LAW MEDICAL RELIEF (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Report of a Departmental Committee appointed by the Local Government Board for Scotland to inquire into the system of Poor Law Medical Relief, and into the Rules and Regulations for the Management of Poorhouses, with Supplement [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

AGRICULTURE AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION (IRELAND) ACT, 1899.

Copy presented, of Order transferring to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, the powers and duties of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland in respect of the portion of the Sea and Coast Fisheries Fund placed at the disposal of the Department by the Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act, 1899 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

AGRICULTURE AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION (IRELAND) ACT, 1899.

Copy presented, of Amended Regulations made by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland as to the taking of samples under the Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act, 1893 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL BANKRUPTCY (IRELAND) ACT, 1888.

Copy presented, of Order in Council, dated 24th March, 1904, adding the county of Armagh to the district assigned to the Belfast Local Bankruptcy Court [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

COOLIE IMMIGRATION.

Copy presented, of Immigration Ordinances of Trinidad and British Guiana [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

POOR RELIEF (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Copy ordered, "of Statement of the Amount expended by Boards of Guardians for In-maintenance and Out-door Relief in England and Wales during the half-year ended Lady Day, 1904."

"And similar statement for the half-year ending Michaelmas, 1904."—(*Mr. Grant Lawson.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Grievances of Post Office Employees—Report of Committee.

MR. BOND (Nottingham, E.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether the Committee appointed to consider the grievances of certain classes of employees of the Post Office will make its Report before the Post Office Estimates are considered.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) I am unable to say when the Committee will make its Report.

Instruction in Household Economy in Highland Crofting Schools.

Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary for Scotland, having regard to the fact that 565 scholars in public schools in Scotland received instruction in household economy during the year 1903, will he state whether any, and, if any, how many were taught in schools in the Highland crofting counties.

(*Answered by Mr. A. Graham Murray.*) Yes, forty-three of the children were in schools in the crofting counties.

Fortnightly Payment of Wages on the Clyde.

Mr. HUNTER CRAIG (Lanarkshire, Govan): To ask the Secretary for Scotland if his attention has been called to the hardships endured by working men and their families through the custom prevailing on the Clyde of paying wages fortnightly instead of weekly, as in England and Ireland; and whether, in view of the fact that the cost of living is thereby increased, he will consider the necessity of legislating on the subject.

(*Answered by Mr. A. Graham Murray.*) No. My attention has not been called to the matter referred to in the hon. Member's Question, and in these circumstances I am not contemplating legislation on the subject.

Tenders for Admiralty Yacht "Enchantress."

Mr. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, East, Toxteth): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the tender for the "Enchantress," Admiralty yacht, was accepted on the ground that it was the lowest; what the amount of the accepted tender was; how much has been paid to date; and how much the Admiralty reckon will require to be paid still before the accounts are finally closed.

(*Answered by Mr. Pretyman.*) The tender accepted was the lowest, but, like other Admiralty tenders, it was not accepted solely on that ground, but after full consideration of the offers from all points of view. It is not usual to state the amount of an accepted tender, but, in view of the special circumstances, and the fact that this vessel will be completed in June next, there is no objection in this case to stating the price, which was £124,583 0s. 4d. As shown by the Navy Estimates for 1904–5, pages 230–231, the expenditure on this vessel up to the 31st instant is expected to be £93,035, and £33,924 is provided for the completion of the vessel in 1904–5.

Re-armouring of Ships of "Royal Sovereign" Class.

Mr. J. F. HOPE (Sheffield, Brightside): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the question of re-armouring the ships of the "Royal Sovereign" class is under consideration.

(*Answered by Mr. Pretyman.*) The reply is in the negative.

German Shipbuilding Programme.

Mr. YERBURGH (Chester): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can state the number of battleships that Germany intends to lay down during the current financial year.

(*Answered by Mr. Pretyman.*) Two are to be laid down according to the present building programme.

Post Office and National Telephone Company.

Sir F. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge): To ask the Postmaster-General whether it is the policy of the Department in districts where they are in competition with the National Telephone Company to refuse to their subscribers intercommunication with the subscribers of the company within each of the areas into which the company divide the country, though granting such intercommunication freely in other areas; and whether the Department, looking upon the extension and general use of the telephone as of public advantage and utility, will act in a spirit of general public convenience and, ignoring such a question of trade competition, grant equal facilities to their subscribers universally.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) It is not the policy of the Post Office to refuse to allow its subscribers to communicate with the subscribers of the National Telephone Company in areas in which the two systems are in competition. On the contrary, I should be glad to arrange for intercommunication between the two systems in all cases, but I have no power to require the National Telephone Company to make such an arrangement.

Alleged Neglect in Dublin Post Office.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that some letter bags were despatched unsealed from the Dublin sorting office on the 28th ultimo; and, if so, whether he has caused any investigation into this matter, and can he say who was responsible for the neglect; and what action has been taken to prevent such a mistake occurring again.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) It is not the case that any mail bags were on the night of the 28th ultimo despatched from the Dublin Post Office without being sealed. Two or three bags were allowed to leave the sorting room before they were sealed; but the omission was observed by the checking officer in the ordinary course of his duty, and rectified before the bags were despatched. Some carelessness was certainly shown by an officer in the sorting office, and, after some further necessary inquiry, proper notice will be taken of the irregularity. The fact that the omission was observed and remedied shows that the existing arrangements are sufficient to ensure that bags shall not be despatched unsealed.

Promotion of Dublin Telegraph Officials.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: To ask the Postmaster-General if he can explain why, notwithstanding the fact that several officers of rank and experience in the Dublin Telegraph Office have applied for postmasterships in Ireland, no appointments have been made for years from amongst the members of that office.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) The claims and qualifications of officers in the Dublin Telegraph Office who have from time to time applied for postmasterships have been carefully considered with those of other candidates. Every endeavour is made to select the best qualified men; and, if it is the case that officers from the Dublin Telegraph Office have not been successful in obtaining appointments for which they have applied, the explanation is that other applicants were found to possess higher qualifications for the vacant posts.

Working Hours in Dublin Sorting Office.

MR. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green): To ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that on several occasions recently many sorting clerks and telegraphists were deprived of the nine clear hours at home in the Dublin sorting office; and can he say why the stringent instructions issued by his predecessor to the Dublin authorities were not carried out.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) The normal attendances of the sorting clerks and telegraphists at Dublin provide for an interval of nine clear hours at home in every case. The only occasions on which the interval has been interfered with are when, owing to exceptional pressure, some of the men have been detained for a short time on extra duty, which is, of course, paid for at the authorised rates.

Duties of Female Telegraphists in Dublin Telegraph Office.

MR. NANNETTI: To ask the Postmaster-General if he will explain why ladies in the telegraph office in Dublin have been compelled to learn perforating; and will he say if he intends to grant extra remuneration for a qualification which ladies are not required to possess at all centres.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) Telegraphists at Dublin, as elsewhere, should be able to work any instrument in use at their office, and there is no reason for granting extra remuneration in the circumstances to which the hon. Member refers.

Discharges from the Post Office Engineering Department.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General if his attention has been called to the number of employees in the service of the engineering department of the postal telegraphs who have recently been discharged both in London and the provinces; is he aware that a number of them have been continuously employed for from eight to fourteen years, and consequently had reason to believe their employment was of a permanent character; and, if so, will he state what is the reason for such discharges, and whether preference will be given to these men in the event of future engagements, and if their previous service will then be allowed to count towards pension.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) The employees to whom the hon. Member refers are labourers temporarily employed for the carrying out of new telegraph or telephone works, and necessarily when the works are completed or cannot be proceeded with for any reason their services are dispensed with. New works will shortly be again in progress now that funds are placed at my disposal by Parliament, and preference will be given to all who have done well on previous works. Service of this kind does not carry pension.

House of Commons Post Office—Secrecy of Telegrams.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: To ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been called to the fact that during certain portions of the time of the sittings of this House the telegraph instruments are fixed on the public counter of the telegraph office, and that the signals can be heard by people buying stamps or transacting other business; and, if so, whether he will take steps to secure the secrecy of telegrams.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) My attention had not previously been called to the fact, but I will look into the matter and communicate with the hon. Member.

Passive Resisters in Prisoners' Dock.

MR. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that at the Alford Petty Sessions on 8th March last, the Rev. W. Turner, Primitive Methodist minister, who was summoned for non-payment of the education portion of his poor rate, refused to stand in the prisoners' dock, but was compelled to do so by the chairman of the Bench; whether he will inquire into the circumstances, and make a representation to the justices as to this action of the chairman.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas.*) I have made inquiry into the case, and am informed that at Alford it is the practice for all defendants appearing before the Bench, whether on a criminal charge or on a summons in a civil matter, to stand in the dock. The defendant in the case now in question asked for an exception to be made in his favour, but the chairman of the Bench declined to accede to his application, explaining that it was the invariable practice in that Court for the defendant to stand in the dock, and that it implied no stigma. In view of the ordinary practice in this Court, I do not see my way to make any representation to the justices.

Government Testing of Leadless Glazes.

SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether samples of china and earthenware coated with leadless glazes, or glazes containing a small percentage of lead, are still sent to the Government laboratory by manufacturers for testing purposes; or whether any difficulty has been thrown in the way of that practice.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas.*) The temporary arrangement made in 1899, under which samples of fritts and glazes have been examined at the Government laboratory, has been discontinued. The arrangement was made in connection with the proposal then put forward by the Home Office, that all glazes should conform to a certain standard of solubility and with a view to assist manufacturers in their experiments to provide themselves with glazes conforming to the standard. The arrangement became unnecessary as the chemists in the industry became familiar with the method of determining the solubility; and manufacturers had in fact, of their own accord, ceased to send specimens for a long time previous to the formal discontinuance of the arrangement. The arrangement at no time extended to the testing of samples of ware.

Mr. Hooley—Suggested Public Prosecution.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.): To ask Mr. Attorney-General whether his attention and that of the Director of Public Prosecutions has been drawn to the observations of Mr. Registrar Brougham in relation to Mr. Hooley; and whether it is intended to institute any proceedings to test the validity of the allegations publicly made against the latter.

(*Answered by Sir Robert Finlay.*) I am informed that Mr. Hooley's affairs have not been before Mr. Registrar Brougham, but Mr. Brougham, as Official Receiver, made a report in 1899. It was very carefully considered by the Attorney-General and the Director of Public Prosecutions. Every inquiry was made. Proceedings were not taken because it was found impossible to obtain the necessary evidence.

Valuation Bill—Date of Introduction.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT: To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the Valuation Bill will be introduced at an early date after Easter, and is it intended to deal with more than the reconstitution of the valuation authorities.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) The answer to the first part of my hon. friend's Question is in the affirmative. As to the latter part, I am afraid I cannot enter upon a statement as to the scope of the Bill until it is introduced.

Port of London Bill.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it is intended to press forward at an early date after Easter the Port of London Bill.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) I am not in a position to make a statement on the subject at present, but I trust there will be no undue delay in proceeding with this measure.

Proposed Buoy at Entrance to Lough Foyle.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that a number of the masters of the Canadian Royal Mail Steamers, owned by Messrs. Allan Brothers, have objected to the position in which the Commissioners of Irish Lights propose to erect the gas and bell buoy at the entrance to Lough Foyle, on the ground that the buoy in that position will be of no service whatever to ships frequenting Lough Foyle; that the Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners have also objected to the position assigned to the buoy; and that, notwithstanding this expert opinion, the Commissioners of Irish Lights refuse to deviate from the position originally taken up by them; and, if so, will he say what action he proposes to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) I am aware of the views expressed by Messrs. Allan Brothers in regard to the position of the proposed buoy at the entrance to Lough Foyle, but I have not received any representation on the subject from the Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners. The Commissioners of Irish Lights, after careful consideration and experiments, are of opinion that a first class whistling buoy will not ride safely except in the position they have selected. I am not in a position to interfere with the discretion of the Commissioners in the matter.

Tibetan Mission to St. Petersburg.

SIR MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE (Bethnal Green, N.E.): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he has any official information to the effect that the Tibetan mission which was expected at St. Petersburg last month has been informed by Russia that a later date would be more opportune for its reception, and that the mission will accordingly reach St. Petersburg at the end of May with presents for the Tsar from the Dalai Lama.

(*Answered by Earl Percy.*) His Majesty's Government have no information on the subject.

Indian Public Works Loan—Railways and Irrigation.

MR. PRICE (Norfolk, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for India if he will state what are the amounts assigned for railways and water storage or irrigation respectively of the Public Works Loan for 30,000,000 of rupees just announced by the Indian Government.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The loan in question is required in order to provide a portion of the money to be expended on railways and irrigation works in 1904–5, but it is not specifically allocated to particular works. The capital expenditure on irrigation works and State railways estimated for the year is: Irrigation works, £833,300; State railways, £6,310,300.

Rumoured Poisoning of Ameer of Afghanistan.

SIR MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE: To ask the Secretary of State for India whether any official information has been received to the effect that the Ameer of Afghanistan had been poisoned.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) No.

Labourers' Cottages in the Castlebar Union.

DR. AMBROSE (Mayo, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that five labourers in the Castlebar Union applied about five years ago for labourers' cottages and an acre of land each; that they complied with the regulations required in making such applications, and got the requisitions signed by twelve ratepayers; and that, although the applications were approved by the guardians, no further steps have been taken with regard to the building of the cottages; and could he explain the cause of the delay.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) In 1900 some representations under the Labourers Acts were made to the rural district council, which declined to act on them, and as no petition for a local inquiry was addressed to the Local Government Board, it could take no action in the matter. Further representations have since been submitted to the council, but were declared to be informal. Recently the medical officer of health has been called upon by the council to furnish reports respecting the houses alleged to be unfit for habitation with a view to the council taking the necessary steps to provide cottages.

Teaching of Blind and Epileptic Children in Ireland.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin County, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that for several years past provision has been made in Great Britain for a capitation grant from the Imperial Exchequer in aid of the maintenance and teaching of blind and epileptic, as well as of deaf and dumb, children, and that there is not any similar provision as regards Ireland, he is prepared to make proposals for removing such inequality of treatment.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) I refer to my reply to the hon. Member's similar Question of yesterday.†

Drainage Works in County Clare.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the flooding of a considerable area, in consequence of the overflowing of the Scariff River, in county Clare; and whether, in view of the loss entailed by these floods on the people of the district, the Government will take some steps to help the people to institute some drainage works.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) Representations have been made to me in this matter. The Board of Works engineer will make an inspection of the district as soon as his other engagements permit.

Improved Landing Stage at Falmore, County Donegal.

MR. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Congested Districts Board has received a memorial from the fishermen of Falmore, county Donegal, with reference to the completion of the work commenced some time ago for the improvement of the landing-place; and what steps it is proposed to take in the matter.

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† See page 823.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) I replied to a Question on this subject on the 5th August, 1902†. Representations were received by the Board in February last from the fishermen, but the Board decided not to make any further expenditure on the work.

Physical Tests for Volunteers.

MR. YERBURGH: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether recruits for the Volunteer force have to pass any physical test; and whether he can state what proportion of the Volunteer force is efficient for active service.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster.*) Under paragraph 156 Volunteer Regulations, recruits for the Volunteer force have to pass a physical examination, and a certificate of physical fitness is signed by the examining medical officer on the form of enrolment. As regards the second part of the Question, efficiency for active service depends on so many conditions other than that of physical fitness, that I am not in a position to give the hon. Member the information he requires.

Army Ages of Recruits—Cost of Training.

MR. YERBURGH: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state the percentage of recruits last year of eighteen years and under, of from eighteen to twenty years, and of over twenty years, and the age at which the average recruit is now considered fit for active service; and what recruits of seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, and twenty years of age, respectively, cost the country by the time they arrive at the age of twenty-one.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster.*) The percentage of recruits for the first nine months of 1903 are as follows: seventeen to eighteen, 5 per cent.; eighteen to twenty, 61 per cent.; twenty and upwards, 34 per cent. The normal age at which a soldier is considered fit for active service abroad is twenty. The details of the cost of recruits of the Infantry of the Line by the time they reach the age of twenty-one are as follows: Enlisting at seventeen, £186; eighteen, £144; nineteen, £93; twenty, £45. Recruits of other branches of the service cost proportionately more.

War Office (Reconstitution) Committee's Report, Part III.

MR. SEELY (Lincoln): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether His Majesty's Government have accepted the recommendations contained in Part III. of the Report of the War Office (Reconstitution) Committee; and when the machinery they have devised will be in working order.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster.*) The reply to the first part of the Question is, speaking generally, in the affirmative. As regards the second part of the Question, it is impossible to say, at present, as to when the whole reorganisation will have been completed. It involves the adjustment of many complicated questions.

Compulsory Retirement of Major-Generals Gatacre, Thynne and Trotter.

MR. SCOTT-MONTAGU (Hampshire, New Forest): To ask the Secretary of State for War under what authority Major-Generals Gatacre, Thynne, and Trotter have been compulsorily retired from their several duties, in view of the fact that they are entitled to serve till the age of sixty-two, and that they are all under that age.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster.*) These officers have been retired under the powers conferred on the Secretary of State for War by Article 517 of the Royal Warrant for pay, etc., there being no probability of an opportunity arising for their future employment.

Explosion of Shell at Rathcoursey—Government Compensation.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the verdict of the jury at the coroner's inquest held at Rathcoursey, county Cork, on Monday last, in connection with the death of naval pensioner Daniel Driscoll by the explosion of a live shrapnel shell; whether he is aware that such shells are frequently strewn about the strand at Rathcoursey, and that they are also liable to be hauled up by fishing nets; whether steps will be taken to give effect to the recommendation of the jury with a view to prevent similar accidents in future; and whether compensation will be given to the widow and family of this man.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxii., p. 666.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster.*) No report has reached the War Office of the occurrence in question, and I am not therefore in a position to state whether this is a case in which compensation can be granted. In accordance with the regulations, all possible precautions are taken to prevent accidents from unexploded shells, but the hon. and gallant Member will understand that it is impossible to account for every such shell fired seawards.

Banking Facilities in Nigeria.

Mr. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that there is, and for some years has been, a bank established in Nigeria (the Anglo-African Bank) with which almost the whole trade does business, and through which the Government collect a large portion of their duties (through the medium of cheques drawn on the bank), and that such bank has expressed its willingness to the Government to accept responsibility for the disposal of redundant silver coin; and if so, will he explain why facilities as to specie importation are granted to the Bank of British West Africa in other British Colonies and refused to the Anglo-African Bank in Nigeria, seeing that representations have repeatedly been made to the Government by the leading Nigerian merchants through their trade associations that trade is being seriously hampered by the want of such facilities.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Lyttelton.*) I am aware of the existence and operations of the Anglo-African Bank and that it has expressed its willingness to accept responsibility for the disposal of redundant silver coin; but, in view of the fact that it is not independent of the limited number of large trading concerns which control the trade of Nigeria, it would not, in my opinion, be fair to other traders, or tend to promote competition and the development of trade, that the bank should be given special facilities for or control over the importation of specie.

Auditing of Borough Accounts.

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT: To ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will state when it is intended to take steps to carry out the recommendations of the Municipal Trading Joint Committee as to the audit of borough accounts.

(*Answered by Mr. A. J. Balfour.*) I can only refer my hon. friend to the answer I gave yesterday to the Question put by my hon. friend the Member for the Hyde Division,† the tenor of which was that I feared there was practically no hope of being able to deal with this matter by legislation in the course of the present session.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Dangerous Derelict at Sea.

Mr. CUMMING MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware that the officer commanding the Royal Mail Steamer "Port Royal," of the Imperial Direct West India mail service, has stated that, on the homeward passage, he sighted and examined the wooden sailing ship "Mary A. Troop," of St. John, N.B., abandoned, waterlogged, and derelict; that this wreck is a serious danger to navigation; and that its position on the 7th inst. was lat. 34.7 N., long. 58.37 W., Bermuda bearing S. 71 W., distant 330 miles; and, if so, whether he will take immediate steps to remove this danger to the life and property of passengers travelling over this track of steamers and sailing vessels.

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Pretyman, Suffolk, Woodbridge): Reports as to derelicts are sent to, and dealt with by, the Board of Trade, not the Admiralty, but the Admiralty have received an intimation from an unofficial quarter of the existence of this derelict. The Report of the Derelict Committee of 1894 (Parliamentary Paper, Cd. 7568) pointed out the enormous difficulty of finding these moving specks in mid ocean, the very small danger which they actually present, and the futility of attempting to destroy them except under very special circumstances. The position of this particular derelict, which is on the American side of the Atlantic and far from great routes of trade, is not such as to make the circumstances exceptional, in the opinion of the Admiralty, or to justify the dispatch of one of H.M. ships on a long search.

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† See page 861.

MR. CUMMING MACDONA: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a passenger steamer from Port Royal came within three yards of this derelict last month? And if that be so, surely one of H.M. ships might surely be sent?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): That was on the 7th March.

Chinese Emigrant Ships—Regulations.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the rules for Chinese emigrant ships will be at least as stringent as those contained in China, No. 3, 1875, pages 19–23, prepared by the Portuguese Government for Maçao and communicated to Lord Derby.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. LYTTELTON, Warwick and Leamington): The rules to be observed will be based on the Hong-Kong Chinese Passenger Ordinances and should give as good protection as the rules referred to in the Question.

Bubonic Plague in South Africa and Immigration of Chinese Labourers.

MR. JACOBY (Derbyshire, Mid.): On behalf of the hon. Member for the Chesterfield Division, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Government will prevent any Chinese labourers from entering South Africa under the Chinese Labour Ordinance until the Transvaal and the rest of South Africa are declared free from bubonic plague.

MR. LYTTELTON: Although since the appearance of plague at Cape Town in the beginning of 1901, South Africa has never been entirely free from bubonic plague among rodents, and the latest reports in my possession show that Port Elizabeth and East London were still suffering from rat infection in February, no serious difficulty has been met with in dealing with the various slight outbreaks among human beings which have occurred in different parts of South Africa during the past three years. There is no reason to anticipate special difficulties at Johannesburg; and, under these circumstances, I can give no undertaking to prevent the entry of Chinese labourers as soon as the Transvaal Government are advised that such introduction can take place without undue risk.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland): Has the right hon. Gentleman's attention been drawn to a statement that Sir Patrick Manson has advised that on sanitary grounds the importation of Chinese is undesirable, and is that statement correct?

MR. LYTTELTON: No, Sir; no such advice, as far as I know, has been given.

Plague at Johannesburg.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will give the most recent official information that he has received respecting the outbreak of plague at Johannesburg; and if he can state whether steps are being taken to destroy rats at Port Elizabeth and other ports, especially in ships arriving from infected ports.

MR. LYTTELTON: I have no more recent official information than that which I have published, but I have asked Lord Milner to furnish a weekly Return of cases and deaths during the outbreak. Steps are being taken at the British ports that no mortality among rats escapes observation and examination, and I am making further inquiry.

SIR WALTER FOSTER: Will the Returns be published from time to time during the recess so that we may see the progress of the plague?

MR. LYTTELTON: Yes, Sir.

Recruiting Labour in China for the Transvaal.

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has requested Lord Milner to represent to the Native Labour Association at Johannesburg that the Government disapprove of Chinese labourers who have been enlisted for the Transvaal being removed from the places in which they live before the recruiting agents, who are already at work, receive licences under the Ordinance, and before the Chinese Government have been able to make known by advertisement the nature of the contract the labourers will be asked to sign at Hong-Kong.

Mr. LYTTELTON: I have not thought it necessary to give such directions to Lord Milner. I have no information, and do not believe that recruiting of Chinese labourers has proceeded beyond preliminary steps intended to prevent loss of time when the Ordinance, the regulations and the requirements of the Chinese Government come into operation.

Terms of Chinese Labourer's Contracts.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies what safeguard there will be for the Chinese indentured labourer if he finds that continuous work in the mines is deleterious to his health; whether, if, under these circumstances, he breaks his contract with the object of returning to China, he will have to repay the expenses and the cost of his passage home; and, if so, whether arrangements will be made to render it possible for him to earn the necessary amount, seeing that he is prohibited from doing any work above ground.

Mr. LYTTELTON: The safeguard is that if he is unfit for work, he will be returned at the importer's expense; if being fit for work he breaks his contract he will have to repay expenses and cost of his passage home. The assumption is that, having entered into the contract, he should keep it, unless he proves unfit.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: What I wish to know is, what will be the position of the indentured labourer whose health breaks down in the mines.

Mr. LYTTELTON: I think immediate unfitness for work is provided for in the answer which I have given.

Mr. CROOKS (Woolwich): Will care be taken that every Chinaman who is indentured shall deposit a sum sufficient to cover the cost of his being sent back to China. Otherwise the whole thing will be a farce.

[No answer was returned.]

South African War Claims.

Mr. AINSWORTH (Argyleshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies what amount is still outstanding for claims for war damage by subjects of the Crown in South Africa; how much more money will be required for this purpose beyond that already voted; and what is the machinery in South Africa for dealing with these claims.

Mr. LYTTELTON: A sum of £2,000,000 was provided out of the Transvaal Guaranteed Loan for payment of compensation for the first invasion losses in the Cape Colony and Natal. It is estimated that £561,000 will be expended in the Cape Colony out of this sum, and £1,066,000 in Natal. There will, therefore, remain a surplus after all admitted claims have been paid in these colonies. I am unable to state what is the amount of outstanding claims in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony but the sums which have been provided out of the Imperial Exchequer, as free grants, for paying compensation in these colonies, viz., £2,000,000 for British subjects, neutral foreigners, and natives, and £3,000,000 for burghers, will not be exceeded, as they will be distributed *pro rata* among persons entitled to share in them. Claims for compensation have been assessed in the Cape Colony and Natal by commissions appointed locally, and in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony by the Central Judicial Commission at Pretoria, presided over by a Judge of the Supreme Court of the Transvaal.

Mr. AINSWORTH: To whom must application be made by those who consider that they have claims?

Mr. LYTTELTON: I am afraid I cannot answer that, but I can hardly doubt that the tribunal to which these matters have been referred has provided machinery by which applications may reach them.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): Has the claim of the De Beers mines been satisfied?

[No answer was returned.]

Malta.

Mr. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that a general election will shortly be held in Malta; and whether, in view of the fact that this will be the sixth general election held in the course of nine months, he will now publish the correspondence that has taken place since the last Blue-book on Maltese affairs was issued, in order to give Members an opportunity of discussing Maltese affairs with full knowledge of the subject when the Colonial Office Vote is under discussion.

Mr. LYTTELTON: I hope to be able to lay Papers on this subject shortly after Easter.

Cape Inscribed Stock—Income-Tax Deductions.

Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, having regard to the fact that the London and Westminster Bank, Limited, as agents for the Cape Government, deducted from stockholders of the £9,997,566 Four per cent. Consolidated Inscribed Stock £166,626, representing 4d. in the £ in excess of the amount due for income-tax on the 15th April last, will he state how much of the sum thus overpaid has been returned to the stockholders by the Board of Inland Revenue.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.): The hon. Member has calculated the excess of income-tax deducted at 4d. in the £ on the capital value of the stock, instead of on the half-yearly dividend of 2 per cent. on that value—thus multiplying by fifty the amount of excess income-tax, which was no more than about £3,300. To ascertain what amount of this overpayment has been repaid to claimants would involve a large amount of labour, which could not be undertaken without seriously impeding the examination of claims for the current year, at what is almost the busiest season of the year.

Mr. WEIR: Cannot the right hon. Gentleman say how much has been returned to the bank?

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! This Question has been answered several times.

Mr. WEIR: Not this part, Sir. I only want to avoid the necessity of bringing the matter up later on.

*Mr. SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman has said he cannot give the details asked for.

Uniform Railway By-Laws.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the various railway companies have yet agreed on a uniform system of railway by-laws for confirmation by the Board of Trade; and, if not, will he take such steps as may seem expedient with a view to bring about unanimity among the railway companies on the subject.

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: The Irish railway companies have been in communication with the Board of Trade, with a view to the submission of a uniform code of revised by-laws for railways in Ireland. If progress is made with this code I will consider whether the Board can usefully again bring the question before the English and Scottish companies with regard to whom the position is still as stated in previous replies given to the hon. Member.

Dairy Inspection.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, having regard to the epidemic of sore throat at Woking last autumn, and at Finchley early this year, attributable to milk taken from cows out of health, will he consider the expediency of taking such steps as may be necessary to insure the occasional examination by a veterinary surgeon of all cows kept for the purposes of a public dairy.

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. GRANT LAWSON, Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk): Legislation would be necessary to give effect to the hon. Member's proposal, and I have caused the suggestion to be noted. I could not, however, promise to introduce legislation on the subject during the present session.

High Courts of Justice—Arrears of Business.

MR. OSMOND WILLIAMS (Merionethshire): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether his attention has been drawn to the arrears of business in the higher Courts of Law and to the delay caused by the infrequency of the Sittings; and whether the Government propose to take any action in the matter.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir ROBERT FINLAY, Inverness Burghs): I have made inquiries as to the state of business in the several branches of the Supreme Court. I am informed that as regards the Court of Appeal, the Second Division is now hearing Chancery Appeals set down in the month of January of this year, so that there are no arrears so far as they are concerned. It is hoped that at next Sittings both Divisions will be able to take King's Bench Appeals, and it is believed that, unless any unforeseen accident occurs, by the beginning of the Long Vacation there will certainly not be more than three months arrears in the Court of Appeal. In the Chancery Division there are no arrears whatever, and the Judges are abreast of their work. In the Probate, Divorce, and Admiralty Division, there are, owing to illness, some arrears, but it is hoped that they will be cleared off before the Long Vacation. In the King's Bench Division the work is in a better state than it has been at any time during the last five years. There are nearly fifty fewer cases standing for hearing than there were at the commencement of the Sittings, and, with the exception of cases standing over, all the cases now undisposed of were set down since the Long Vacation. As to the special and common juries and the cases without jury, the cases now standing for hearing were all entered after the 10th January. The Sittings in London are continuous in all the Divisions, but the number of Judges able to sit depends from time to time upon the number that are absent on circuit. The Government do not propose to take any legislative action in the matter.

Mr. E. T. Hooley's Bankruptcy.

MR. LAMBERT (Devonshire, South Molton): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General if any explanations have been demanded of Mr. H. Brougham, Official Receiver, who reported on the 16th January, 1899, that Mr. E. T. Hooley had been guilty of fraud, and of which the Director of Public Prosecutions could not obtain the necessary evidence.

SIR ROBERT FINLAY: I am informed that in the inquiries which were made with the view of a prosecution in the matter on which Mr. Brougham had reported, the Attorney General and the Director of Public Prosecutions were in constant communication with Mr. Brougham and obtained all necessary information from him as to the facts and evidence upon which he had made his report.

Cookery Instruction in Highland Crofting Counties.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, having regard to the fact that 56,158 scholars in public schools in Scotland received instruction in cookery during the year 1903, will he state how many of these scholars were taught cookery in schools in the Highland crofting counties, and at how many schools in the crofting counties cookery was taught; and, seeing that a teacher of cookery must, as a rule, hold a certificate from a training school of cookery recognised by the Department, will he state what number of teachers were employed, and how many held the certificate referred to.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. SCOTT DICKSON, Glasgow, Bridgton): 2,904 scholars were taught cookery in fifty-one schools in the Highland crofting counties. Forty-four teachers were employed, and of these forty-two held certificates recognised by the Department.

Vaccination of Scottish Pauper Children.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the circular letter recently issued by the Local Government Board for Scotland enjoins the compulsory vaccination of all pauper children who do not exhibit satisfactory marks of primary vaccination, and will he say whether medical officers of poorhouses are required to examine the vaccination marks of all pauper inmates of poorhouses, and to revaccinate when that course seems desirable; and will medical officers be instructed to keep a record of the number of inmates examined and the number revacccinated.

Mr. SCOTT DICKSON: I am informed that the object of the circular was to secure that all the inmates of poorhouses should be vaccinated, but the circular does not enjoin the compulsory vaccination of the class of children referred to; it recommends, but does not require, that medical officers of poorhouses should examine paupers on admission with regard to the adequacy of their protection against smallpox; it does not require compulsory revaccination. The Local Government Board have not instructed the medical officers of poorhouses to keep a record of the number of inmates examined, and the number revaccinated; and they prefer in the meantime to leave this to the discretion of poorhouse committees.

Dublin Natural History Museum Staff.

Mr. BOLAND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is now in a position to state that the additional assistance required in the staff of the Dublin Natural History Museum will be provided without delay.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. Wyndham, Dover): No, Sir; detailed inquiries are in progress, and it will be some considerable time before a final decision can be come to.

Mr. BOLAND: I will try and raise this Question in the course of the afternoon.

Bee-Keeping in Ireland.

Mr. BOLAND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Department of Agriculture has received any further representations from public bodies or private persons interested in the bee-keeping industry with a view to checking the disease of foul brood in bees; and, if so, can he say what steps will be taken to carry out the proposals.

Mr. WYNDHAM: No further representations have been received. The Department is still of opinion that its scheme of instruction in bee-keeping should have an adequate trial before the question of taking additional steps by legislation can properly be considered.

O'Donel Estate, County Mayo.

Dr. AMBROSE (Mayo, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Congested Districts Board purchased, about four years ago, two large farms on the O'Donel Estate, at Newport, county Mayo, and have since used them for grazing purposes, notwithstanding the fact that they are situated in a congested district; and whether, with a view of improving the condition of the neighbouring tenants by enlargement of their holdings, he will see that those farms are immediately resold to them.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The Board did not purchase the fee simple of the two farms in question, but only the tenants' interest. The estate has not yet been put up for sale, and until the Board acquire the fee it has no power to resell the farms.

Dr. AMBROSE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the receiver of the O'Donel Estate, at Newport, county Mayo, compelled the tenantry on last year and 1902 under threat of eviction to clear up the hanging gale, on the ground that the estate was about to be sold by the Court of Chancery, and that this estate has been kept in the Court of Chancery for over twenty years; and whether, seeing that the estate contains about 104,000 acres, comprising thirteen large grass farms, and is situated amongst a very poor and congested tenantry, he will use his influence with a view to expediting the sale either to the Congested Districts Board or the Estates Commissioners, so that it may be redistributed amongst the neighbouring tenants.

MR. WYNDHAM: An Order for the sale of this estate was only made last November and the proceedings, which have proved extremely complicated and intricate, cannot, it is expected, be disposed of before the end of the year.

Supply of Boats to the Congested Districts Board.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork Co., E.): On behalf of the hon. Member for North Wexford, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland how many fishing boats have been built in Ireland for the Congested Districts Board, and how many out of Ireland, and their average price respectively; how many fishing boats are now building or on order for the Congested Districts Board in Ireland and out of Ireland, and their average price respectively; and how many second-hand fishing boats have been bought by the Board in Ireland and out of Ireland.

MR. WYNDHAM: Forty-nine boats were built in Ireland for the Board at an average cost of £203, and fifty-seven were built out of Ireland at an average cost of £156. Two boats are building in Ireland at an average cost of £212, and one out of Ireland at a cost of £169. Eleven second-hand boats were bought in Ireland at an average cost of £137, and ten out of Ireland at an average cost of £120.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: Why were not all the boats built or purchased in Ireland?

MR. WYNDHAM: One reason was that the boats built in Ireland cost a great deal more than those built out of the country.

MR. JOYCE (Limerick): They were better boats.

Re-armament of Royal Irish Constabulary.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Lee-Enfield carbine, with which the Royal Irish Constabulary are to be re-armed in place of the Martini-Henry, has magazine action carrying seven cordite ·303 cartridges; and whether, seeing that magazine rifles will not fire buckshot and that that particular ammunition was introduced into the force from alleged motives of humanity, the arms at present used by the Royal Irish Constabulary may, in the interests of humanity and the economy of public money, be advantageously retained.

MR. WYNDHAM: The reply to the first inquiry is in the affirmative. The fact that buckshot cartridges cannot be fired from the Lee-Metford carbine was considered by the Government when authorising the re-armament. The contingency of the police having to repel an attack is so remote that I scarcely feel called upon to deal with it. In the opinion, however, of the Inspector-General, in which the Government concurs, the ·303 bullet is a more humane missile at close ranges, and less liable to inflict accidental damage at long ranges. The re-armament was, as I have stated, approved on grounds of economy.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Where does the economy come in of giving the whole force a new rifle?

MR. WYNDHAM: It is always wasteful to maintain two separate kinds of weapon in any one country. You have to have different kinds of ammunition. It is better to have one gun and one cartridge.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: How many cartridges have the police fired out of their present rifles?

[No answer was returned.]

Owenmore River.

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has yet received the report of the engineer, recently sent to inspect the Owenmore

River district, in the county Sligo; and, if so, will he state the nature of the report, and say whether it recommends any scheme for the drainage of that river.

MR. WYNDHAM: The inspection was made by one of the Department's agricultural inspectors, not by an engineer. It appears from the Inspector's report that losses due to floods have been sustained by the farmers from time to time. The Department will consider whether it is practicable for it to take any action in the matter.

Tipperary Urban Council Surcharges.

MR. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that the Tipperary Urban Council in the first instance petitioned the Local Government Board to remit the surcharges made by the Local Government Board auditor, he can see his way to recommend the remission of the costs, amounting to £200, incurred in getting the said surcharges set aside in the Court of King's Bench, and save the ratepayers of Tipperary from being mulcted in this sum for protecting themselves from the illegal action of a Local Government Board official.

MR. WYNDHAM: The surcharges were made by the auditor in September. The parties aggrieved took no action whatever till December, when the auditor had taken proceedings at petty sessions to recover the amounts surcharged. They then, for the first time, wrote to the Local Government Board, and were informed that unless they lodged formal appeals the Board had no power to decide on the validity of the surcharges. The parties did not take that course, but elected to proceed in the Court of King's Bench. This Court could have awarded costs against the auditor, but did not do so. The present application is practically an appeal from the Order of the King's Bench Division, and there is no fund out of which the Board can pay the costs.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): As this may be the case in every constituency in Ireland, does the right hon. Gentleman think he will get gentlemen to undertake public duties which may involve them in enormous cost?

[No answer was returned.]

Care of Feeble-minded Persons.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can now make any statement as to the course which the Government intends to adopt in respect of an inquiry into the care of feeble-minded persons.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): This matter has been carefully considered by the heads of the Departments chiefly concerned; but there are other matters besides the subject alluded to in the Question which should be inquired into, and therefore the reference to the Royal Commission which we propose to institute has not yet been determined upon. Early information will be given on the subject.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: May I ask whether this inquiry in any way refers to the Cabinet?

[No answer was returned.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): Has the Leader of the House any further statement to make with regard to business?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: A detailed statement of the business after Easter beyond the first few days will not be expected, but at the rising of the House I will give the right hon. Gentleman all the information it is in my power to give.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): In view of the great interest felt, cannot the right hon. Gentleman name approximately a day for introducing the Budget?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Budget will be introduced in the week after the House reassembles. I cannot give the exact date.

CUNARD AGREEMENT [MONEY].

Committee to consider of authorising the issue out of the Consolidated Fund of such sums as are required for making advances to the Cunard Steamship Company under an agreement made with that Company (King's Recommendation signified), upon Tuesday, 12th April.—(*Mr. Victor Cavendish.*)

SITE FOR DUKE OF YORK'S SCHOOL BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 14th April, and to be printed. [Bill 145.]

SITE FOR DUKE OF YORK'S SCHOOL BILL [LORDS].

Ordered, That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Site for Duke of York's School Bill [Lords], with respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bills.

NAVAL PRIZE BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 12th April, and to be printed. [Bill 146.]

ALIENS BILL.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's) : In introducing this Bill to make regulations with respect to the immigration of aliens, I should like first to say that we have no intention whatever of unnecessarily interfering with the admission into this country of foreigners, or of throwing any unnecessary difficulty in the way of their general entry into this country. We readily recognise that a large portion of the alien residents in this country are among the most loyal, industrious, and law-abiding citizens of the kingdom. But there is a certain class of undesirable aliens who are not so welcome, and whose repatriation is very desirable. The number of aliens in this country, as shown by the census returns, has enormously increased in the last twenty years. In 1881 there were more than 135,000; in 1891, upwards of 219,000; and in 1901, nearly 287,000, or an increase in that period of something less than 152,000. I will remind the House that these figures do not really represent the number of the foreign element in this country, because all those who have been born to these aliens in this country are, of course, not included in these figures. Unfortunately, these aliens have a tendency to occupy very few centres in this country, and therefore their presence creates great difficulty in certain districts. Between a fourth and a fifth of the whole of the foreign population in this country are residing in four or five centres. The last return shows that, excluding the large families which many of them have, something like 54,000 are residents in the borough of Stepney. There are other boroughs in London where large numbers have also taken up their habitation; and by their residence in these districts they have not only displaced a large amount of labour, but have also occupied a very large number of dwellings from which they have driven the *bonâ fide* inhabitants. There is also a large settlement of aliens in Scotland, to which my attention has been called quite recently by hon. Members opposite who are connected with trades unions and the working classes. Not only have these aliens living in these districts caused a great deal of overcrowding, with all its evils, and a displacement of British labour, but I am sorry to say, from the information which has reached me at the Home Office, that the feeling which exists between these settlements of foreigners in London and the native population is becoming very strained, and is really a very serious menace to the maintenance of law and order in these districts. This evil, I am sorry to say, is not likely to diminish; and, indeed, it is increasing. The immigration has increased very largely in recent years. The figures show that in 1902 200,011 immigrants landed in this country, and that in the following year there was an increase on that figure of over 7,000. A very large proportion of these come to this country *en route* to America; but it is fair to say that not less than 81,000 came to this country to stay in 1902, and 82,000 in 1902. Another point which I would ask the House very seriously to consider is that the class of aliens which we get here is not the class of aliens which at all makes the best citizens. It is the class excluded by the United States, and therefore it is fair to say that we only get the refuse, if I may use that expression, of those aliens who would otherwise be going to the United States. Another point which deserves very serious consideration is the increase of crime committed in this country by these aliens. The number of aliens charged and convicted has very seriously increased in the last three or four years. In the last five years the number increased by no less than 55 per cent.; and we have had representations not only from the London police magistrates, and the chairmen of quarter sessions, but from the Recorder, and even from the Judges, as to the very serious charges which are placed on the country by the maintenance of this large alien prison population.

It is on these grounds, and on these grounds only, that I think some interference on the part of the State is urgently required at the present time. I need not take up time by labouring the point. It seems to be generally admitted, at all events by the great bulk of the Members of the House, that it is a matter which should receive the attention of the House, and that the Government are fully justified in attempting some remedial measure. The House will remember that last year a Royal Commission which had carefully considered the whole of this question reported; and the Bill which I am now asking leave to introduce is based on the recommendations of that Commission. The Bill first of all repeals the Registration of Aliens Act, 1836. That is the only Act now in force, but the provisions of it are quite obsolete and quite unequal to deal with the present difficulty. In its place the Government propose that the Secretary of State, in some matters in consultation with the Board of Trade and the Local Government Board, shall have power to make regulations requiring the master of any ship landing these passengers to make the returns which were formerly made, but with very much greater precision and care, and to give the officers appointed for the purpose facilities to inspect such aliens as may be in those ships. Information may also be required from any alien as to his character and antecedents, as to his identification, and as to his proposed place of residence. He may also be required to give particulars of any change of residence within two years of his last entry into this country. The passengers may be inspected before landing, and aliens, under certain conditions, may be detained or altogether prevented from landing, and, where necessary, will be taken back to their own country. These regulations may apply generally, or to special ports, classes of voyages, or passengers, as the Secretary of State may prescribe. Another provision of the Bill will enable the Secretary of State to appoint officers, of course with the sanction of the Treasury, in order to carry out the regulations, or, if so prescribed, the Customs Officers or coastguards may be called upon for this purpose.

Coming to the question of inspection in the United Kingdom, the Bill provides that the inspecting officer may detain or prohibit the landing of the following classes: Persons who within five years have been convicted in any foreign country of an "extradition" crime, prostitutes or persons living on the proceeds of prostitution, persons likely to become a charge upon public funds, persons having no visible or probable means of support, persons of notoriously bad character, persons suffering from any infectious or loathsome disease, and persons refusing to give the prescribed information with regard to themselves. All these cases will be carefully considered by the Secretary of State, and he will, where necessary, make an order confirming the prohibition to land, or requiring the alien to leave the United Kingdom within a fixed time or giving him permission to land conditionally or unconditionally. And now with regard to the convicted alien. With that class of alien, at all events, I think there can be no sympathy whatever. Aliens convicted on indictment of felony or misdemeanour and sentenced to penal servitude or imprisonment without the option of a fine, or aliens convicted by a Court of summary jurisdiction of an offence punishable by imprisonment for three months or more without the option of a fine and sentenced accordingly, may, as part of the sentence, be ordered by the Court to leave the United Kingdom on their release from prison.

They will have to obey that order, or, if they do not, they will be proceeded against under the provisions of the Vagrancy Act, 1824, which, I am advised, will be amply sufficient for the purpose. I would point out that we have carefully guarded that the regulations under this Act shall be subject to any treaty obligations which we may have with foreign countries. As to the question of the areas in which these aliens live, the Local Government Board will take powers for full inspection and for fully dealing not only with the areas themselves, but also with the tenements and the houses in which they live. I have endeavoured to explain as shortly, but as clearly, as I could the proposals of the Government, and I trust the House will see no difficulty in allowing the Bill to be introduced and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make provision with respect to the Immigration of Aliens and other matters incidental thereto."—(*Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas.*)

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said it was a great pity that the principal Government Bill of the session—one involving matters of great delicacy and novelty so far as this country was concerned —should have been introduced under a rule which allowed only two brief statements to be made to the House. The Bill was accorded the distinction of first mention in the King's Speech, and it had a paragraph to itself. It was entirely beyond precedent, therefore, that such a measure should have been introduced in that manner. The first impression of a good many Members would be that the Government could hardly be serious in making this proposal at this moment, and some Members were likely to consult Mr. Speaker as to the possibility of moving an Instruction, on going into Committee, to make the Bill applicable to the Transvaal. It was an extraordinary fact that they should be called upon to consider a measure of this description which, for the first time, was going to prevent European white men from coming, at their own cost, as free men to a free country, at the very moment when the very same Government were engaged in sanctioning the importation of yellow men by Government intervention and under servile conditions into the Transvaal. And it was a curious fact that the Colonial Secretary, who, with Lord Milner, was the author of the one proposal, was also deeply concerned in the other. The right hon. Gentleman, whose name stood second among the signatories not making Minority Reports of the whole Report of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, was no doubt familiar with the legal maxim which said that a man might not take advantage of his own wrong; but he thought that that was what the right hon. Gentleman was doing on this occasion. If ever this Bill, or a Bill substantially like this, passed, and he believed it would pass for he knew he was speaking for a hopeless minority, it would be owing to the very excitement which had been raised over this question by the proposals of the Colonial Secretary.

The ground upon which he based his opposition to the Bill—on which he had in the past and always would oppose measures of that kind—was that the majority of the aliens who came to this country and who would be struck at by the Bill were the helpless victims of political and religious persecution. With regard to the Russian Jews at Stepney they largely came to this country because of the persecution they were subjected to at home, and the Roumanian Jews wholly came here from that cause. What he was afraid of was the vague and dangerous form of the regulations, which were left absolutely at the discretion of the Home Secretary. They might have, and he was afraid they would have, the effect of excluding from this country persons who came under conditions which had been their pride in the past, and many of whom had asked, received, and blessed our hospitality in the past. One point was referred to by the Home Secretary on which there was the keenest difference of opinion. It was the fact that in recent years the Trades Congress, representing the organised workers of this country, had ceased to be asked to pass that resolution which years ago they used to pass unanimously. The Trades Congress now believe that they are able to absorb the small number which we receive as compared with the numbers which other countries receive, and that these men are capable of, and are being made into, good trades unionists in this country. The speech of the Home Secretary, as regards numbers, is not, I think, fully borne out by the census and the Report. We have in this country under 250,000 foreigners, *i.e.*, the resident population of all kinds of foreigners in this country, rich and poor; and it is a mere drop in the ocean, infinitely smaller than the number of foreigners who inhabit almost every other country in the civilised world. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the rapidity with which they are coming. That rapidity has been alleged by the hon. Member for Sheffield for the last fifteen years, and alleged on figu es which have always broken down when tested by the census. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No."] The census itself shows that there are under 250,000 of these people, the vast majority of whom, the Home Secretary admits, are excellent subjects. It is asserted that the children of these destitute aliens are destitute aliens in fact, although British subjects in name; but no one who has read the Report can doubt that the overwhelming majority of the children of these people go to our Board schools and speedily mix with the population. We are not a destitute - alien - importing people so much as we are a destitute-exporting people. There are far more Britons who go destitute into foreign countries, to earn their livelihood than destitute aliens who come here.

*MAJOR EVANS GORDON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): Is the right hon. Baronet quite correct in saying "destitute"?—surely the emigration from this country is carefully selected.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: I think anyone who has watched the emigration from Ireland can see that alien emigration is of that description.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): To the United States?

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: I repeat that my view of this measure is that it will be used to exclude from this country people whom we shall afterwards be ashamed we have excluded. Under this measure, had it been in force at the time of the Paris Commune, it is certain that many of the most distinguished exiles who arrived in a state of starvation, and whose return to their own country was afterwards welcomed by their country as a whole, with every expression of gratitude to this country, because we maintained and supported them in their work, would have been excluded men like Dalou, one of the greatest sculptors of modern times, who came starving to this country, and to whom a commission was given by the late Queen Victoria to save him from starvation; a man who, after refusing private and personal pardon when a general amnesty was granted, years afterwards, returned with dignity to his country. Many of the finest and noblest men—for there were many fine and great and noble men in that movement—were destitute exiles who might have been stopped under this Bill. From Russia there came men like Prince Peter Kropotkin, who was stripped of every particle of his property by the Russian Government when he arrived here, and was afterwards welcomed by the people of this country; at other times there had come as destitute exiles, men like the M.M. Reclus brothers, the great geographers to whom we were now proud to have given hospitality. With regard to the Russian Jews, against whom the heaviest allegations are made, they are the people who inhabit Stepney and other portions of the East End, and of whom there are some in Manchester and Leeds. Some 20,000 of these people are engaged in tailoring in this country; some 3,500 in cabinet-making, and some 3,000 in the boot and shoe trade. These are, in fact, the whole people against whom this agitation is directed; and it is because of the feeling directed and excited against these men that we are asked to pass this Bill. The hon. and gallant Member for Tower Hamlets has visited the country of "the pale." I do not know whether he has seen, as I have seen, broken-down prisoners from within the pale—men who, for political reasons, were sent across Siberia because they were the ringleaders in revolutionary movements. Those men are not the dangerous persons, and not the miserable persons, they are represented to be in this country. Miserable as may be their condition when they come here, they are not of a stock inferior to our own. They are of a stock which, when it mixes with our own in course of years, goes rather to improve than to deteriorate the British race. [MINISTERIAL cries of "Oh!"] Well, I will not detain the House any more. I will not read to the House—because hon. Members ought to read for themselves—the statements which were made on this very subject in the Report which we hold in our hands. But I would ask the House to listen to the words of a man who has gone from us—I mean Mr. Lecky—who wrote of the persecution which sends these people to this country—

> "The Russian persecution stands in some degree apart from other forms of the Anti-Semitic movement on account of its unparalleled magnitude and ferocity."

That I believe to be the case. It is because of the dangerous powers which are given to the Home Secretary to make regulations which, I believe, cannot but have the effect of excluding these persons that I have grave hesitation in doing anything but oppose this Bill. I have known many strange scares in this House, but I never knew so strange a scare, even under the odd circumstances of the present Government, at the present time as that which caused the tremendous whip to-day, and the appeal even in their newspapers to Members to come down and save them in the division. I make the frankest admission to hon. Members opposite. I am not going to divide the House—[Ironical MINISTERIAL cheers]—because I am certain that having regard to the fact that some of my friends who sit here were pledged to legislation of this kind, even before the Member for Sheffield, they would at least vote for the introduction of this Bill. But that is no reason for not stating to the House as I have done, and, I hope, frankly, why I cannot support the Bill.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas, Mr. Secretary Lyttelton, Mr. Long, Mr. Attorney-General, and Mr. Cochrane.

Sir Charles Dilke.

ALIENS BILL.

"To make provision with respect to the Immigration of Aliens and other matters incidental thereto," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 12th April, and to be printed. [Bill 147.]

MR. FORDE RIDLEY (Bethnal Green, S.W.): When is the Bill likely to be in the hands of Members?

***MR. AKERS - DOUGLAS**: I will hand it in to-night.

TELEGRAPH (MONEY) BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to—Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill, Telegraph (Money) Bill, without Amendment.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE (EASTER).

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House, at the rising of the House this Evening, do adjourn until Tuesday, 12th April, and that, at the conclusion of the proceedings on Notices of Motion at this Evening's Sitting, Mr. Speaker do adjourn the House without Question put."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

***SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN** (Stirling Burghs): This Motion is an indication that we have reached the close of the first Act of the Annual Parliamentary piece. We are now invited to fix the duration of the *entr'acte*. Eight weeks have passed over our heads since the curtain rose on this play on 2nd February, and this is the usual time, and the most convenient time, for reviewing the progress of events during that interval, and of seeing how far we have advanced. Has the piece—has the play advanced as far as we might have expected? Has the plot become intelligible and clear? Is it likely to develop into a tragedy or a comedy? Is the *dénouement* likely to be that which the author of the piece desires? These are the questions which naturally occur to us at this moment. Now, the first of the three portions into which this part of the session is divided by the customary holidays is, as we all know, devoted to the discussion of the general policy of the Government, either on the Address or on Motion made by private Members; secondly, to the submission of the Estimates for the year and their primary consideration; and thirdly, to the introduction of the principal and important legislative measures which the Ministers have elaborated during the recess.

Let us see how we stand in each of these particulars, taking them in an inverse order. Bills, Sir: There were twelve Bills named in the King's Speech of which only one of the first order has been introduced. It was introduced yesterday. It is a Bill which I regard, and which many Members of the House regard, as of the very highest importance; but it does not occupy that place, no doubt, in the estimation of about nine-tenths of the Members of the House—because it relates to Scotland. That measure has been introduced by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland amid general good feeling and goodwill of the Scottish Members who are most interested in it, and we have shown that disposition towards it all the more because we recognise in it the hand not only of the Secretary for Scotland but his predecessor in office, in whom, in this matter, we had much confidence. If I might venture to tender advice to the Government I would say that they would do well to carry that principle of delegation a little further and to leave chiefly the final determination of the measure to the Scotch Members. In that case I am certain a thoroughly good Bill will be the result. But another Bill has just been introduced under our eyes, not of the first order, but still evidently exciting on the other side of the House a most unusual degree of interest. When we return fresh from our holidays we are to be invited to tackle another question—the question of licences—and by that time Ministers, no doubt, will have made up their minds how far it will be safe for them to go in the task which they have deliberately undertaken of giving fresh relief, protection, and endowment to the liquor traffic. The twelve Bills promised in the King's Speech was a meagre allowance for the session; but two of the twelve introduced is a still more meagre performance for the first of the three parts of the session.

Now I come to the Estimates, and what do they show? In the King's Speech we were told—

> "Although the Estimates have been framed with the utmost desire for economy, the burden imposed on the resources of the country by the necessities of naval and military defence is undoubtedly serious, and the possibility of diminishing this burden is being carefully considered in connection with the general problem of Army and War Office reform."

But what sign do the Estimates give of this burning desire for economy? There is a decrease in Army expenditure, naturally, because, excepting with Somaliland—and for that war nothing is taken—we are not at war. But there is a general steady increase in the Navy of £2,500,000, and an increase in the Civil Service Estimates of £12,500,000. The Government are proposing this increase to an already bloated expenditure, with full knowledge, no doubt, of the condition of the revenue, and of the disposition and capability of the taxpayer. We shall see after Easter with what success they will accommodate the one to the other. But in the last sentence of the paragraph from the King's Speech which I quoted we are directed to look for relief to two things, quite distinct, but often confused—namely, Army reform and War Office reform. Of changes in the organisation of the Army the Estimates show no sign whatever, for they are based on the system already in force. But we have heard a great deal of War Office reform. Only three days ago the third part of the new scheme of the Committee was promulgated; and it is a relief to note that this time the impropriety of introducing the King's name has been avoided. But the publication is sufficiently curious owing to the very remarkable covering letter in which the Committee out-do all their previous performances. Their inspiration, if I may use the phrase, has become more plenary than ever. Every part of their proposals must be accepted, at the risk of vitiating the whole; and the Prime

Minister, their creator, is called upon to stand and deliver. What in the world will become of him and us all if he does not? At the same time, *ex abundanti munificentia*, they speak nicely of him. They pat their creator on the back, which is a thing that requires some courage, and they go on in a crescendo scale. In the first Report they said tha tuseful work had been done under the right hon. Gentleman's auspices; but now they become more ecstatic, in fact, rhapsodical, for they say—

> "We have before indicated our views of the incalculable value of the work of the Defence Committee, due to the initiative and resource of the Prime Minister."

They suggest that—

> "With few exceptions, none of your predecessors since 1815 were qualified by aptitude or inclination to undertake this special duty."

This is an odd way, let me observe, of enforcing their irrefragable theory, that at the head of this Cabinet Committee must always be the Prime Minister, to proclaim in this public way the total insufficiency for the purpose of all the Prime Ministers until the right hon. Gentleman came on the scene. My right hon. friend here says, "including the Duke of Wellington." The Committee speak of an exception. It is a graceful thing to imagine that the Duke of Wellington is the exception. In fact, the right hon. Gentleman has been wasting upon Parliament, Ireland, education, and other matters talents of the first order in strategy. I do not grudge him his laurels for achievements which I can well believe were most remarkable, although they are shrouded in obscurity, for as the world knows nothing of its greatest men, so the House knows nothing of the Committee of Defence. Even the Cabinet does not know much about it. At least, I suspect it does not. But this Committee, this triumvirate, know all about it; and they are not only satisfied with the Prime Minister, but they are excessively pleased with him. They evidently think little of Parliament and possibly less of the Cabinet, except, indeed, the Secretary of War, whom they much admire because of his declaration that in all probability the Government would accept their recommendation *en bloc*, a declaration which is precisely that which he did not make. We are not used to this mixture of the pontifical and the hysterical in State documents. Their scheme, like most sublunary things, has its merits and demerits; decided merits, as I think, but also decided faults. Let it be judged soberly, and not on compulsion, and the first thing for us to know is what the Government themselves think of it, and what they are going to do with it. Then when we know that we can come to our humble conclusions. One interesting thing which the Committee say is that a remedy for the condition of things disclosed by the War Commission was suggested in the Minority Report, and that to them "was entrusted the specific duty of advising on the means of applying the remedy in question." That then is the genesis of the Committee. If there is this virtue in a Minority Report, why may we not go further? Here is this licensing question, which puzzles everyone. We have had a Minority Report on that question also which these nimble-minded gentlemen might put into shape and have ready a measure for the Government before the conclusion of the Easter recess. Then there is the question of rating, which the Government have undertaken. Again we have a Minority Report signed by some of the highest authorities on the subject in the country. What an admirable basis for legislation would be turned out in that case also by these competent and confident hands. I give the Government the benefit of this suggestion. Do I dare to go a little further still? We are not yet at the end of the embarrassments of the Prime Minister. He has trouble enough with licences, national defence, rating, and other things. But there is also the Church question. The right hon. Gentleman proposes to appoint a small and absolutely impartial Commission to settle the doctrines of the Church of England. Why ransack the country for impartiality when you have at hand this triumvirate, which in a few weeks will be quite idle, who think so well of him, and who, being entirely without experience in ecclesiastical as they were in military matters, will be admirably suited to settle the convictions of everybody?

Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.

But I have been led to discuss the extraordinary action of this Committee under the shadow of the Estimates. I now pass on to the question of policy. And here I am afraid I may get into trouble, because certain Gentlemen are so interested in some great question of public policy, that although they are unable to fix a day for it they are all very anxious to call the attention of the House to one subject or another, and I believe in that way they have placed some impediment in the way of the House employing themselves in discussing this question and this policy. But it is not my intention to go into the merits of any policy. I am circumscribed in the way in which I can walk to-day. There is the question of Somaliland, about which we should have liked to hear a little more; and there is the question of Tibet, which has been brought inadequately before the House. As I am practically debarred from entering upon these subjects, I shall naturally not attempt to say anything about them. But I come to South Africa. South Africa has been incidentally a good deal under discussion in connection with the question of indentured labour, but an event has happened in the last two or three days which is of so startling a kind that I think an opportunity such as this cannot be allowed to pass without referring to it—I mean the extraordinary language used by the High Commissioner reported yesterday. The High Commissioner is said to have declared that "he did not care twopence for the opinion of people 6,000 or 7,000 miles away"—in other words, for the opinion of the people of this country. This explains a good deal; but is this what is called "thinking Imperially?" Why, it is the rankest separatism. Why, this public servant was sent to the post he occupies and appointed to it on purpose to represent the opinions of the people of this country for which he expresses so much contempt. I ask this point-blank Question of the Colonial Secretary: Has Lord Milner been already rebuked and reprimanded for so gross a breach of propriety and so complete a misconception of his own position, and if he has not, what will be done to bring him to his senses? But the greatest of all present questions of policy is the fiscal policy, and it becomes more vague as we go on. Two things have been declared of it by the Prime Minister in that memorable letter in which he said, writing to the Duke of Devonshire—

> "I see no difficulty in successfully carrying out the policy which for a fortnight you were ready to accept by the help of the Administration which for a fortnight you aided me to construct. On this point I feel no disquiet."

Let the House observe that there are two things stated here. First of all, the Prime Minister sees no difficulty in carrying out the policy; secondly, he will do it with the present Administration. Why, then, did he not march, drums beating and colours flying, to the achievement of this great policy? Why put it off indefinitely? Does it turn out, after all, to be merely for electoral use? Then the inference is that the Government are satisfied with the state and immediate prospects of British trade—the drink trade alone excepted—that the protectionists, by whose favour the Government exists, assent to the Government being satisfied, and that the Member for West Birmingham and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who are at the head of the dominant faction, are acquiescent. Not a voice is raised by all the convinced and converted protectionists in favour of putting the policy into operation. In quietness, if not in confidence, they possess their souls. Silence also reigns in the country. The Press occasionally—yes, but then the demands of the daily circulation are inexorable and cannot be denied. But neither the organs of the late Colonial Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, nor the organs, if there are any, whose business it is to expound and promote the esoteric doctrines of the pamphlet—neither of these are clamouring for immediate action. The fire-eaters of the autumn have reduced themselves to the thin gruel of gentle criticism of imports and of the statistics of the Board of Trade. When a by-election occurs the Tariff Reform League is promptly bundled out of the constituency by the agent of the fiscal reform candidate. A country suffering under intolerable wrongs and smarting from wounds inflicted by foreign nations could hardly comport itself with greater fortitude if its injuries were incurable and there was nothing left for it but to die in the ditch. What a hollow business it all is! Let us think what the case is. A sovereign remedy exists for our industrial evils and is ready to be promulgated at the general election, and yet the Prime Minister, the man who can promulgate it, the man who is in possession of the nostrum, declares that whatever happens he will not resign, which of course is the only way—

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I never said that.

*SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: —of bringing about a general election.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: When did I say I should never resign?

*SIR. H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Not literally whatever happens, but the right hon. Gentleman said that so long as he enjoys the confidence of the King and of this House he should not resign.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Hear, hear!

*SIR. H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The right hon. Gentleman picks his House. The calm with which this is taken shows how little weight the country really attaches to the frantic and frenzied campaign of the autumn, and to all the contortions, equivocations, and sophistications which have sustained His Majesty's Ministers under the weight of their professions. One thing, indeed, has come out by the avowals of the Prime Minister, that there is no contradiction between retaliation and the supposed other policy of preference and protection. They are complementary parts of a beautiful fiscal whole. And this statement has been translated——

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Would the right hon. Gentleman mind reading the extract?

*SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The right hon. Gentleman said that of the two—may I say documents?—which were placed before the Cabinet, the one was not contradictory to the other. If it was not contradictory, and generally on the same subject, it must be helpful, ancillary, and complementary to the other.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman accuses me, as I understand, of having stated at some place and on some occasion unknown, that the policy I have advocated in speeches and documents well known was part of a whole in which protection is included. That is inaccurate.

*SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: We know there was a document which recommended or expounded the policy of preference and protection.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Where did you get that from? The right hon. Gentleman, perhaps, will quote Lord George Hamilton for that statement. He never made any statement so absurd.

*SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The right hon. Gentleman objects to the word protection. Well, if the right hon. Gentleman likes it better, and is more comfortable with it, I will substitute preferences and taxation of food. But this statement is translated into action by what will go down to history as the episode of the Wharton Amendment. That was indeed a momentous episode. It disclosed this state of things—that while the official policy, or phase, or formula held the field as the test of orthodoxy, the policy of the document was the real Party policy, the governing policy. There is lip service to the pamphlet and whole homage to the document. It is the document and not the pamphlet that keeps the Government in power. This interesting episode which, as I say, will be classical and historical, was admirably described by a sorrowing and embarrassed follower of the right hon. Gentleman. He was a staunch and loyal supporter of the Government until this new departure, but writing to his constituents afterwards he says—

"On Wednesday, 9th March, an Amendment to Mr. Pirie's Motion was put down by Mr. Wharton with the sanction if not by the direction of the Government. This Amendment I was prepared to support, as it embodied the views I always held on the subject. It was not until five o'clock on the day the Motion was to be moved that I was informed that the Government had been instructed by its Chamberlainite supporters that this Amendment must be withdrawn. In obedience to this threat or command the Government at once withdrew their Amendment. I am further told by one of Mr. Chamberlain's supporters in the House, that they pledged themselves not to offend similarly in the future. Whether this be so or not, it is sufficient for me to know that the Chamberlainite section of the Unionist Party can and does direct the Government policy as it chooses. Under these circumstances I frankly confess that I have no confidence in His Majesty's Government."

That is the hon. and gallant Member for the Heywood Division. How long, I ask, is this to go on? Everywhere—except in the matter of Chinese labour—indecision, confusion, vacillation, a tortuous course, and a misty atmosphere. So long, the right hon. Gentleman says, as the confidence of the Crown is given to him he will remain in office.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I never said that.

***SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: He will not resign as long as he enjoys the confidence of the Crown and of this House. When the right hon. Gentleman talks of the confidence of the Crown, I think he makes rather too free with the name and authority of the Crown. It is much better that he should adhere to the old fashion and take it for granted, as we know he can, that the Crown will act according to the Constitution. Is it really in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution that the Government—and the right hon. Gentleman is the Government—should retain power when the country demonstrates, on every opportunity afforded to it, that he no longer enjoys its favour? Technically, of course, he has still the support, but evidently the reluctant support, of the House of Commons [Cries of "No"]; but what is the authority of the present Parliament? We have always refused to acknowledge the full claim of the present Parliament to the continued sanction of the electors after the war and its settlement were concluded. [A laugh.] I could adduce a bushel of cases in which many of those who now laugh declared in 1900 that the war was the only subject before the consideration of the country; and at the head of the list I could quote the right hon. Gentleman himself. But now I would ask the right hon. Gentleman to put himself these questions; does the present state of things—of which he is as well aware as I—does the present state of things redound—I would say first of all to his own credit, but I know that is the last thing he considers. ["Oh, oh!"] I know that is the last thing he seeks; the right hon. Gentleman is not a self-seeking man. Does the present state of things redound to the strength of his Party and the prevalence in the country of such principles as may remain to it? Does it redound to the dignity of this House, of which dignity he is the constituted defender? Does it redound to the fame and stability of our tried, trusted, time-worn system of Parliamentary government? These are questions I now ask; these are questions that are asked in the country. ["By whom?"] By everybody. By the answer which his actions give to these questions the right hon. Gentleman, his courage, and his statesmanship, will be judged.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman is apparently very anxious that I should resign; but I am quite unable, after listening with most respectful attention to his speech—though it was no hasty utterance but the point of much careful reflection—to understand why it is he thinks it would be—I will not say to his or our benefit, but to the benefit of the country at large, that we should take so unusual a course, such an unprecedented course as far as I am aware, of resigning office while we retain the confidence of the House. ["Oh, oh!"] The right hon. Gentleman may think we do not retain the confidence of the House; but there is a perfectly well-known method of discovering whether that is so or not, and that is by formal discussion and division on the subject. It is a familiar practice of the Constitution, the clear and only recognised method of determining whether His Majesty's Ministers for the time being do or do not retain the confidence of the House, which is the arbiter of their destiny. The right hon. Gentleman in working up to his appeal to us to resign office while we retain the confidence of the House travelled over a large number of facts and arguments which seem to me to have had very remote relation to the conclusion at which he eventually arrived. He began by discussing the condition of business. Here we are, he said, at the beginning of the Easter holidays with only two or three Government Bills introduced and the great burden of legislative work still before us. That is true, but who is to blame for it? If there is blame—and I do not say there is—on whom does the blame rest? We have not gratuitously occupied the time of the House with other matters. We have been sedulous, as every Government will be sedulous, I hope, under the new Rules to preserve the rights conferred on private Members by those Rules. [" Oh, oh!"] Can any hon. Gentleman say that those rights were better preserved before those Rules were passed? We have been sedulous to preserve those rights, and the Rules have worked as I expected they would work. But, apart from this, time has been taken up because the House wished to discuss the Estimates at considerable—I will not say inordinate—length, and because partly on the Address and partly on other occasions there was a desire to devote time to the discussion of what in reality was a succession of votes of censure upon the Ministry. I do not deny that hon. Gentlemen opposite had a perfect right to do this, but it is rather hard to turn round upon us and say, Look at the result of all this. The fact may be deplorable; nobody regrets it more than I do, who am primarily responsible for the arrangement of business; but it cannot be said that we are to blame because business has not proceeded more rapidly. The right hon. Gentleman divagated into an attack upon the Committee for the Reconstitution of the War Office. He made at great length—I will not say a violent—but a spirited attack upon the gentlemen who formed the Commission, and turned them and their labours into ridicule, and implied that they, with very little personal knowledge of the work entrusted to them, had rashly set their hands to a scheme of reform that would not bear examination.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I did not say so.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: What the right hon. Gentleman did say was that we should be well advised in turning them on to such questions as discipline in the Church and other matters, because they had no personal knowledge or experience on the subject. If that sarcasm had any meaning, I suppose it was that their qualifications to deal with Army reform were of the same shadowy description. I observe that one of the right hon. Gentleman's faithful supporters agrees in that.

Mr. LOUGH (Islington, W.): The Secretary for War has told us that two of the Commissioners have had no military experience.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: He did not say they were not specially qualified for their task, which is the whole point of the matter. The right hon. Gentleman has commented upon a letter with which the Report of the Committee was accompanied, and which they regarded as part of their Report, and in which letter they lapsed into phrases complimentary to myself. Well, it is no breach of confidence to say that I expressed my own personal desire to the Commissioners that the letter should be omitted, not merely on account of those phrases, but because I did not think it added any weight to the Report; that was, and is, my own personal view. But the Commissioners were absolutely within their right in differing from me. They had an absolute right to present their views in the shape they thought they ought to take; and it was impossible for me, it would have been illegal and contrary to all precedent, to have published what to them would have appeared to be a truncated version of their Report. If I had been asked if the whole of the Report was there I should have been obliged to say it was not, and the right hon. Gentleman and his friends would have been the first to insist that the Report in its integrity should be presented to the House. Having expressed my regret that these gentlemen thought it necessary to publish that letter, let me express, in the most emphatic language I can command, my sense of the great service they have done to the cause of War Office reform and the interests of the country at large. The right hon. Gentleman appears to rate that service very low. I can only say that one of those gentlemen gave up a position as Colonial Governor solely to give his services on the Committee, and he with his colleagues has given gratuitously labours compared to which the ordinary work of Commissioners sinks into insignificance. They have not been content with meeting two or three times a week; they have sat *de die in diem*; they have spent health and strength upon their work, and, in my opinion, have performed services which are valued now by all reformers, and the value of which will not diminish as time goes on. Of course, I am not going to say now, any more than my right hon. friend said when the Army Estimates were on, the precise extent, or in what form, the Government will adopt the recommendations of the Committee; but the reforms we shall adopt, in their general principles, will be due to their efforts. This has been made perfectly clear by what has fallen from my right hon. friend in previous debates. But, Sir, I think the tone in which the right hon. Gentleman spoke of the gratuitous labours which these gentlemen have lavishly put at the service of the country is very little suited to encourage such services in the future from other public servants, and I desire most emphatically to dissociate myself and all those for whom I have the right to speak from the sneering tone he has adopted towards men whose services he, as an ex-Secretary for War, should, I imagine, have been the first to pay a tribute.

Having disposed of the three gentlemen who had done great service to the community, the right hon. Gentleman was still unsatiated, and he turned his benevolent attention from the Commission upon War Office reform to Lord Milner. He put a categorical Question to my right hon. friend which, if I understood the right hon. Gentleman rightly, amounted to this—whether my right hon. friend had or had not administered a prompt rebuke to Lord Milner because a Reuter telegram had quoted, or misquoted, three lines out of a speech which Lord Milner has delivered in South Africa. That is the right hon. Gentleman's idea of the way in which a great officer of the State, carrying out a task of unexampled difficulty in a distant colony of His Majesty's dominions, should be treated by the Leader of the Opposition. I have not the least idea, nor can anybody have the least idea, what it was precisely that Lord Milner said, or in what context he said it. But if Lord Milner intended to imply a certain amount of benevolent contempt for certain opinions that have recently been expressed in this House upon subjects nearly connected with the prosperity of the country of which he is the Governor, then, Sir, I should be the last to complain.

Then the right hon. Gentleman came back to home politics and to our old friend the fiscal question, and he put, if I understood him rightly, this dilemma to the Government.

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners.

The House went; and, being returned,

Mr. SPEAKER reported the Royal Assent to—

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Act, 1904.
2. Telegraph (Money) Act, 1904.
3. Metropolitan Improvements (Funds) Act, 1904.
4. Dumbarton Tramways Order Confirmation Act, 1904.
5. Kilmarnock Corporation Order Confirmation Act, 1904.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE (EASTER).

Question again proposed, "That this House, at the rising of the House this Evening, do adjourn until Tuesday, 12th April, and that at the conclusion of the proceedings on Notices of Motion at this Evening's Sitting, Mr. SPEAKER do adjourn the House without Question put."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I had not much more to say to the House when the flow of my oratory was somewhat checked by the constitutional episode which has taken place, and that little refers entirely to what the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition has said on the fiscal question and on the constitutional position of the Government at the present moment. If I understood the right hon.

Gentleman rightly, he endeavoured to put this dilemma to the Government. He said either you believe in your fiscal doctrines or you do not. If you do not believe in them, you ought not to profess them; if you do believe in them, you ought at once to dissolve Parliament in order that you may have at once an opportunity of putting them into operation. His argument is this—if you believe in retaliation—as it is called, but we will not quarrel about language—and if it is going to have all the good effects which you claim for it—why is the country to be longer deprived of the blessings which this particular medicament is going to bring to its commercial distresses and diseases? I think the right hon. Gentleman seems to mistake the situation. The fiscal controversy, no doubt, has raged very acutely since my right hon. friend the Member for West Birmingham started it by his famous speech delivered in the middle of May last year. But never from the first moment that that bone of contention was thrown down among us, has he or any member of the present Government stated that in his opinion there was any ground for shortening the natural duration of the present Parliament on account of the topic which had suddenly taken so much hold on the public imagination. In my opinion, an appeal which Lord Rosebery made to the Government was a well-founded appeal. I remember that in one of his speeches he begged that the country might not be rushed in this matter. I do not ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he agrees with Lord Rosebery, because I do not wish to touch on matters personal to leaders on the other side. All I quote Lord Rosebery for is for the purpose of agreeing with him; and I stated, I think at Bristol, almost immediately after he made that speech, that it would not be proper to hurry the country, and that the appeal he made for delay was a proper appeal, because, in my judgment—a judgment frequently expressed—the change that we recommend in the fiscal policy of the country is an important change. I have never minimised its importance. On the contrary, I have always contended that this view of ours, which I may call progressive free trade, was a real change from the stationary and petrified free trade which passes for orthodox on the other side of the House. And, thinking as I do that that change is an important one, and that it will undoubtedly open for good or for evil a new era in British finance, I think it quite right that the public, on a subject on which they are very little informed—[An Hon. Member: No]—the well-informed Gentleman who interrupts me does not represent the whole people—and naturally, because the subject did not come up for controversy for nearly sixty years—that they should have full time to consider the various aspects in which this complicated and difficult question presents itself, and if they were to form that decision with any undue haste—

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Montrose Burghs): Will the right hon. Gentleman say what is the change?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: It is the change from the old fiscal policy to that which I have embodied to the best of my ability in the Sheffield speech and in the pamphlet with which the House is familiar, and which, as far as hon. Gentlemen opposite are concerned, appears to be more laughed at than read. Whether that reflects more credit on them or discredit on me, I do not pretend to say. That is for others and not for us to judge.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: What is the change?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: It, at all events, was a change sufficient to make the Duke of Devonshire resign, because, if I remember, it was simply on that point that he did resign, though perhaps I ought not to have dragged in his name. But if the right hon. Gentleman really wishes me to repeat all I have said on public platforms and in printed documents I think he is making an excessive demand. But I would put these two Questions. Does he or does he not think that the policy which contemplates as one of its weapons for obtaining greater free trade between this country and others full power of negotiation—does he or does he not think that that is a great change in our fiscal policy? [An Hon. Member: We have the power now.] Of course, we have the legal power to do it now. We have the legal power in the Three Estates of the Realm to abolish the House of Lords.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: May I ask whether this freedom of negotiation is the whole of the change?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I think the right hon. Gentleman will feel that on a subject, on which he himself occupied the House for an hour and a quarter, which has been debated for six days on the Address, and on which I myself, to say nothing of other members of the Government, have made speech after speech, it is rather difficult to compress into an answer to a Question across the Table our whole point of view. There is no ambiguity about it. I venture to say that even persons of the smallest intelligence, not to speak of the people of great intelligence whom I am now addressing, if they were to spend a quarter of an hour in reading what I said at Sheffield and Bristol, would not have the smallest difficulty in understanding what the view of the Government is. I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman was here when the speech to which I am replying was delivered, or he would see that his interruption really is irrelevant. The effect of that speech was to ask why we do not dissolve if we think that this remedy of ours is really good for the country, and I was pointing out that, in my opinion, this change is a great change, and one which the country might with great advantage have, as Lord Rosebery said, time to consider and to see exactly where it is.

The right hon. Gentleman went on from that point to say that there was a special reason, in addition to the one connected with the fiscal problem, why we should resign, and that it was based on the fact that we are a majority having no authority. In saying that he only repeated a charge which has been made over and over again by hon. Gentlemen opposite, and still more by their irresponsible supporters in the country. I have seen it stated hundreds of times. The charge is that inasmuch as the present majority were returned in 1900, when the question absorbing the attention of the country was the war, they had no right to continue their existence a moment after the war was concluded. [An Hon. Member: You said it was concluded.] I believe that is the doctrine the right hon. Gentleman propounds. I say that a more unconstitutional and more absurd doctrine was never propounded.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: As the right hon. Gentleman uses the word "constitutional," I will explain what I said. What I said was that a Parliament elected as this was, almost entirely on the question of the war, was not entitled — though I have never stretched, let me say, the doctrine of mandate too far—to enter upon large and fundamental changes of the law without a further appeal to the country.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman varies his constitutional doctrines at different parts of his speech. His friend behind him has just reminded me that we have the powers and ought to exercise them at once, if we believe in fiscal reform. Now the right hon. Gentleman takes the other view, that before carrying out the new policy of fiscal reform we ought to appeal to the country. I agree to that.

Mr. LOUGH: You exercised the powers in connection with the Sugar Convention.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: What I do not agree to is the right hon. Gentleman's doctrine that, when a Parliament has been elected when one subject is before the constituencies, it is incapable of dealing with other subjects, especially if they be large subjects. I believe that doctrine to be utterly wrong and utterly unconstitutional, and I must do the House the justice to say that, often as I have seen it stated outside the House, I do not remember it being said inside the House by anyone but the right hon. Gentleman himself. Let the House cast its mind back for a moment. What has happened within our own recollection? Mr. Gladstone stumped the whole country from end to end in 1880 upon the wrongs of the Christians in what is now called the Near East. He raised a great storm of passion and emotion on that subject, and almost entirely on that subject, and owing to that subject he swept the country in 1880. Although he had with him an enormous Liberal majority, as far as I know not a single thing was done for the Christians in the Near East. [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh!"] So far as I remember nothing was done, or perhaps nothing could be done—I am not blaming Mr. Gladstone—for the Christians in the Near East. The problem of Ireland suddenly burst on the astonished gaze of the new Ministry as a new phenomenon to which they had resolutely shut their eyes whilst the election was going on, and which they suddenly found themselves compelled to confront. Did they hesitate to revolutionise the whole theory of personal liberty in Ireland and the whole tenure of land in Ireland? Not at all. They set themselves at once to that gigantic task, and open as their policy was, in my judgment, to severe criticism on its merits, nobody, I think, then had the hardihood to say that because that Parliament had been elected to deal with the Christians in Macedonia it was incapable of dealing with this Irish question. I believe I am stating not only what is the constitutional doctrine, but what must be the constitutional doctrine, if we are in this House to have anything in the nature of a stable Government, be the side from which that stable Government is drawn what it may. There are plenty of elements of instability in a House constituted like the present House. Are they going to diminish or are they going to increase as time goes on? The right hon. Gentleman's view is apparently that if a certain number of by-elections go against the Government of the day the Government ought to say—This is the voice of the people calling upon us to resign; we must dissolve and again test the sentiments of the electors. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman or his friends will be found to preach that doctrine in its full extent, let us say, between now and the end of the next five years. I do not in the least know what the next election, or the next election but one, or the next election but two is going to bring forth. [A Member of the OPPOSITION Benches: Five years.] Notice, five years! Never mind how the by-elections go; five years! Happy is the hon. Gentleman who can look forward not merely to the immediate triumphs of his Party when the next election comes, but to a continuous course of undimmed popularity which is to give them every by-election during the first five years of Parliament. I believe that we are following the exact precedent set us by our predecessors and the true constitutional doctrine. I do not for one instant admit that the by-elections are a test, or ought to be regarded as a test of public feeling. They are, of course, a test of the feelings of a particular constituency at the time the by-election takes place. They are not, and they cannot be made, the index and the test of what the feeling of the people of the country is as a whole. Any doctrine that is inconsistent with that is, in my judgment, not only wholly unconstitutional in theory, but wholly unworkable in practice.

The right hon. Gentleman talks really as if we were hanging on in office with a doubtful and wavering majority. [OPPOSITION ironical cheers and MINISTERIAL laughter.] I wish our majorities were larger, but they are larger than the majorities which the right hon. Gentleman had who took office in order to carry the Home Rule Bill in 1892. I do not see why our courage should be less than that of hon. Gentlemen opposite, or why we, who also think we have a great task to perform, should resign that task out of mere faint-heartedness and want of spirit, or should even suggest the idea of handing over the Government to others whom, whatever our respect for them, we do not think so capable as ourselves of carrying on the policy in which we believe. I do not see why we should abandon a task which the country has set us until the constitutional practise of the country requires us to resign our powers. For these reasons I think the right hon. Gentleman, in the conclusion of his varied speech, did little to prove the proposition which I understand he set out to prove—namely, that we on this side of the House are still cumberers of the earth, hangers on, incapable of doing the work which the country set us to do. This work I, on the contrary, believe we shall be able successfully to carry out; and times to come will be able to reckon, in addition to the great reforms which, as I believe, the Unionist Administration may congratulate itself on having carried since it came into office in 1895, at least one other great reform which may compare with any of them—the reform of our Army system.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs) said that the Prime Minister, with his usual inexhaustible ingenuity, had managed to avoid and ignore all the salient facts of the situation. He was very pleased with everything; he was pleased with his majority; he was pleased with his policy; and, above all, he was pleased with himself. His peroration was a most warm and passionate declaration that he had greater confidence in his own capacity than in the capacity of anybody else in this House. That was a very satisfactory state of mind for any man to be in, and he congratulated the Prime Minister on being able to secure that feeling amidst so many difficulties; but, on the face of it, there was nothing in the circumstances to justify anything of the kind. The right hon. Gentleman said something about War Office reform. He would say nothing about it, because he knew nothing about it; but what struck him was that the eulogy which the right hon. Gentleman had passed on these doughty three was not nearly so warm or so passionate as the great panegyric which the right hon. Gentleman had delivered on the Army Corps scheme. His present enthusiasm was feeble and halting compared with that with which he talked about the author of that Army Corps scheme. And the confidence of the right hon. Gentleman now displayed about fiscal policy was nothing compared to the confidence which the Prime Minister formerly felt in the Army Corps scheme, and yet only eighteen months had passed away, and the right hon. Gentleman was preparing for its obsequies. He must say one word in regard to Lord Milner before he passed to the question of fiscal reform. The Prime Minister and his colleagues were constantly complaining of the attacks they, on that side of the House, were making on Lord Milner. Now Lord Milner was the last man in the world who had a right to complain of these attacks, because his Lordship was constantly entering into controversy himself, and the Prime Minister had just defended him for his contempt, benevolent or otherwise, of criticism. A Minister who poured contempt on his adversaries could not complain if they in return criticised him. He did not think the right hon. Gentleman would approve of Lord Milner's utterances, because the chief complaint of the right hon. Gentleman was that these were Party utterances. Very well, he was very likely on those conditions not to approve of Lord Milner's utterances in South Africa. He did not know that the House was any better informed on the subject of fiscal reform than it was before the right hon. Gentleman got up. What they wanted to know was, not whether the right hon. Gentleman was a progressive free-trader, but whether, in the words of one of his own supporters, who contested Lewisham, he was a "Progressive Balfourite." That was the very happy description given of a gentleman who called himself a tariff reformer last September. Last December the Prime Minister did not know what his policy was. He, a few months before, submitted two different itineraries to the Cabinet.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I did not.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said the Prime Minister had very skilfully avoided that question, but it went to the root of the whole controversy, for they had got a statement from a right hon. Gentleman who was a member of his Cabinet—and that statement had not been challenged—that the Prime Minister submitted to the Cabinet two policies, which were not alternatives. One was the policy embodied in the pamphlet, a policy of retaliation; and the other was a policy which involved the taxation of food and preferential tariffs. Were these two alternative policies? If they were not, then there was no difference at all between the Prime Minister and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. It was perfectly clear that the right hon. Gentleman did not know where he was travelling. He submitted the question of his future destination to his colleagues in the Cabinet and at present neither he nor they knew what was the policy of the Government. The House was entitled to know something more. It was all very well to say that this was a question to be hung up; but it was affecting trade, and trade was after all a very delicate machine, and anything of this kind paralysed the energy of the people and in itself interfered with the trade of the country.

The right hon. Gentleman had also very skilfully avoided the general position with regard to the session. He did not say that the session had not up to the present been a very useful one, for it had cleared up one or two things which needed clearing up. They now knew that the war was entered into not so much to secure emancipated white labour as to introduce slave yellow labour. It had also cleared up the fact that our trade was in no immediate danger and that there was nothing in the situation which made it necessary for the Government to produce immediate remedies, although they were told in the recess that we were rushing into bankruptcy. Thirdly, it had cleared up the fact that the Welsh county councillors were not prosecuted because they were lawbreakers but because they were not Scotsmen. Still, with all these things, he thought the session had attained the limits of its usefulness. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to think that they could go on and that the country was taking no note of these things. On many occasions in the constituencies at the last general election the right hon. Gentleman explicitly declared that the one and sole issue was not social reform, but the war, and the moment this Parliament attempted to deal with social reform the country took the Prime Minister at his word, and at the by-elections started to go against him. Thirty seats had been contested since the termination of the war. At the last election they were represented by seven Liberals and twenty-three Unionists; now they were held by seventeen Liberals and thirteen Unionists. Could the right hon. Gentleman have a more explicit declaration from the country that he had ceased to enjoy its confidence? Never had a Parliament before buried so many of its children. There was the Army reform scheme. Three cruel men had sat upon it and it was now no more, and the Government was engaged in embalming its remains. The corn tax lasted a year, and now it was gone. The Irish University was stillborn. Land settlement in Africa was dead. Even the Irish Land Act was very pale and sickly; and as for the Education Act, from the very moment of its birth it had suffered from the most violent convulsions, and he believed that its fond parent was preparing for the worst.

The right hon. Gentleman boasted of his majority, but by what means was he keeping it together? In the daily Press they could hear the crack of the sjambok playing around the shoulders of the stragglers. It was with the greatest difficulty they were brought there. Only one common sentiment bound them together, and that was the fear of death at the polls. The chief Whip said that three-line whips were not enough, but he would suggest that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman should write across them in red ink "beware of a dissolution." But, in spite of all these circumstances, still they lagged behind. There was no energy or enthusiasm in them. With that great capacity for vicarious sacrifice which was always displayed by the ultra-patriotic journals, the Government Press urged Members to abandon their coffee and cigars. They were to eat their meals in future like the Israelites, with their loins girded, staff in hand, and sandals on their feet. However, the constituencies would pretty soon liberate them from that land of bondage. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman, was this a state of things in which Parliament could do any good work? He had before him most important discussions. He had promised a Licensing Bill at last, but how long had he been in bringing it about? It was all very well to say that he had no time, but what about the Dogs Bill? The right hon. Gentleman looked after what might be called the jug and bottle department of the Government, and to the publican outside with his can waiting for the long pull which had been promised to him, the right hon. Gentleman curtly turned round and said "Dogs first." It was pre-eminently a Bill which the country ought to have time to consider, and yet it was not to be produced till after Easter. He would wait with interest the arrival of the dramatic moment when the Prime Minister flung his Party into the brewer's vat. Independence was as much discouraged on the other side just now as if the Party were a Rand mine. Not even the Government were independent. They had their master too. The other day the Prime Minister tried to escape from the Birmingham compound, but the overseer left in charge discovered him before he had gone very far, and he and his colleagues were brought back by their pigtails. And what had happened to the right hon. Member for Ripon, who helped them to escape? He had not been seen or heard of since. He had broken the ordinance and he was a fugitive from justice. The fact was the Prime Minister was working with forced labour, but there was one part of the ordinance he and his Government had faithfully kept, and that was the provision that they should do no skilled labour.

The right hon. Gentleman said that he had the confidence of the Crown and of the House. He had no right to put it in that way. It was unfair to the Crown, which could express no separate judgment. As to the House of Commons, that gave him its confidence because it had not the confidence of the country. If it had the confidence of the country, it would not give its confidence to the right hon. Gentleman for a single evening. The right hon. Gentleman knew perfectly well why hon. Members voted for him. There were thirteen of them who voted for him expecting to get something for the Bann drainage. The price of their confidence was a sluice gate in the Bann. What about other hon. Members? There were 112 whose confidence was not in the right hon. Gentleman and his Ministry, but in a statesman who was outside his Ministry, who did not believe in its policy, and who was working for other ends. These Members were keeping the right hon. Gentlemen in, not because of their confidence in him, but because they proposed to demonstrate by some Tariff Reform Commission that the right hon. Gentleman's policy was wrong. What manner of authority was that to support a Government in a great task? They had a right to ask that the country, which had got important work to perform, should have an opportunity of electing the men whom it thought capable of performing that work. It was perfectly clear that the country had no confidence in the right hon. Gentleman or in his Ministry. That had been shown on every occasion that the country had had an opportunity of expressing its opinion. If the right hon. Gentleman went on clutching at power, in spite of the opinion of the people, he would lose something more important than the confidence of the country, something more difficult to regain, and that was the respect of the country.

MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL (Oldham) said he was very sorry the Prime Minister had left the House, as he had desired to ask him one or two Questions. They were still without information in regard to several phases of the fiscal question, and it was very unsatisfactory that on the eve of the adjournment they should still be left without that information. He had read the right hon. Gentleman's pamphlet, he had listened to the speeches he had made, and he confessed that he still found himself quite unable to understand what the right hon. Gentleman really thought about the issue which was before the country. It was quite true that the right hon. Gentleman had dropped hints here and there, and that carefully guarded sentences had fallen from him as to what was in and what was out of the Government policy. But they did not want to know what was in and what was out of the Government policy. What they wanted to know was what the Prime Minister really thought about the subject that was vexing the country, and he did not think it was unreasonable that they should ask this because, after all, there was a difference in a policy when it was put forward on the faith and honour of a public man and when it was put forward avowedly as a matter of convenient political tactics. There was another reason why they had a right to know. A great many people were being placed in great difficulty with their constituents. He was going to say that great pressure was being put upon them by their Party and by all the officials of the Party who were hostile to them. It was perfectly legitimate to do that if they believed in what they were doing, but it was contemptible to do these things when there was behind them no faith and no conviction. They had a right to ask, even of those who were among them but not of them, for plain dealing and fair audience.

He had made more than one attempt privately to find out the Prime Minister's opinion on several phases of the policy of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. It was not until some months had passed, and many attempts had been made to get these private assurances from the right hon. Gentleman, that he, for one, passed formally from the position of an independent supporter to the position of a declared opponent of the present Government. He quite recognised that that change was one on which his constituents, if they wished, had a right to be consulted. He had certainly no intention of interposing the smallest obstacle to any representation which might be made to him by the Party in his constituency. If they desired him to resign and to submit himself to re-election, they had only to call upon him to do so and the usual course would be followed without the least delay. He had hitherto refrained from taking this course, which a few months ago he intended to take whether they wished it or not, because he had no desire to go through the painful process of breaking up a local organisation, with which he was a short time ago on the most friendly terms, so shortly before a general election, and while they, for their part, seemed perfectly content that matters should remain as they were. But they had only to express their opinion and he would do his best to give effect to it. He had hoped to get information from the Prime Minister as to his personal views on the fiscal question. The Prime Minister alone knew what meaning was to be attached to the mysterious words "retaliation" and "anti-dumping." They might mean much, they might mean very little. The right hon. Gentleman was very careful to leave them indefinite. He said his policy consisted in an assertion of freedom. But what was the good of an abstract assertion of freedom unless there was an understanding of the use that was to be made of it? His policy was described as "anti-dumping." But what dumping was, what comprised anti-dumping; whether all the various causes that contributed to the sale of goods below cost price were to be considered as dumping; under what circumstances these regulations were to be applied—as to all this they were told nothing; and until they were told, definitely and substantially, the House was quite right not to be led into this tiresome dance, step by step and measure by measure, at the dictates of a nimble and ingenious brain.

But if the Prime Minister's policy was unreal, the policy of the Member for Birmingham was real. Everybody knew what that was, and before the House adjourned they ought to know what the Prime Minister's relation to that policy was. They knew that as to Imperial preference the right hon. Gentleman was opposed to it, not because he thought it was not good for the country, but because he thought it would not win many votes at the general election. It was not a noble reason, but it was a practical one, and it was a reason of some sort. But what of the other part of the Member for Birmingham's policy, the 10 per cent. duty on manufactured articles? He saw the Chief Secretary for Ireland present. The right hon. Gentleman was a close personal friend and intimate Cabinet associate of the Prime Minister. Was the right hon. Gentleman able to give the House any information on behalf of the Prime Minister? Had he ever heard of the Tariff Commission? The Prime Minister was supposed not to read the papers; he depended upon social gossip for information as to the intentions of his colleagues in the Cabinet; but perhaps the Chief Secretary knew something of the views of the right hon. Gentleman on this question, and could state whether or not he believed a 10 per cent. *ad valorem* duty would be to the advantage of this country. That was the one feature of the Protectionist policy which appealed to the democratic electorate, and yet they were left in absolute ignorance of the Prime Minister's opinion on the matter. Was the Wharton Amendment a true expression of the right hon. Gentleman's mind, or was it a miserable dodge to place a few unfortunate politicians on that side of the House in a difficult situation? The tariff reformers, who to the number of 112 met, followed an odd procedure, for they decided to inform the Government that unless the Wharton Amendment was withdrawn they would turn them out, and then proceeded to pass a resolution of unabated confidence! Their confidence was not misplaced; they knew their men. When the division was taken, the right hon. Gentlemen the Member for Sleaford and the Member for West Bristol both voted in support of the Government. The difference between the views of those two right hon. Gentlemen was vital; nothing could bridge it; and he desired to know which of the two was being befooled by the Prime Minister. The time had come when the country ought to be relieved from this shifty policy of equivocal evasion; they had a right to know what public men thought on public questions, and what political chiefs believed on great political principles. He deeply regretted that the Prime Minister had absented himself from the debate, but though hon. Members could not be informed of the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman on these questions, the mere formulation of their complaints ought to demonstrate to the country the unsatisfactory, unprecedented, and unconstitutional situation in which Parliament and the people were placed.

MR. ROBSON (South Shields) congratulated the hon. Member for Oldham on the fact that the organised attempt to deprive him of an audience had in no way affected the excellence of his speech, but he thought the Opposition, and the House generally, ought to notice the somewhat novel departure in Parliamentary tactics. Hitherto it had been considered one of the unique distinctions and glories of this House that Members were willing to give an appreciative and sometimes admiring hearing to those who were even diametrically opposed to them. But one could well understand that there came a condition in the state of a Party in which they became somewhat apprehensive of hearing opposite views; Members could become so sensitive, with their opinions in such a condition of unstable equilibrium, that they were afraid to hear a reasoned and plain expression of views which they did not desire to adopt, and that would seem to be the condition of the Party opposite. He hoped the country would take note of that condition, and of the tactics which had been adopted. Whatever the Unionist Party might think of the hon. Member for Oldham, the country would gladly recognise that he was always ready to show the courage of his race and to maintain the high traditions of his name. The Prime Minister was of opinion that there was no occasion for hurry with regard to a dissolution. Nobody supposed that the Government desired an early dissolution, but even more than that they dreaded being forced to adopt a clear and candid attitude in the controversy on which the next election would turn. Hitherto, the Prime Minister had endeavoured to keep the two sections of the Party together, his intention being, in the next Parliament, with the security of a somewhat heterogeneous majority, to choose which section he would befriend. That course of strategy had been rendered difficult by recent events, as the right hon. Gentleman had been all but compelled to disclose his true opinions before the election. But though that course of procedure was discredited as far as this House was concerned, it was by no means abandoned in the country; it was kept alive for electoral reasons, because the right hon. Gentleman supposed that the country did not follow the proceedings of Parliament with as much understanding and precision as was sometimes necessary, and that it could still be deceived by these free-trade arguments in support of a protectionist policy.

During the whole of last session an inquiry was supposed to be proceeding into the fiscal question. How did the Prime Minister regard the results of that inquiry, which was constituted for the purpose of showing whether protection or free trade was the policy best fitted for this country? Apparently the right hon. Gentleman was determined to give the House no information on that point. He did go so far at Sheffield, however, as to say that the policy of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham was outside the range of practical politics. That was a remarkable declaration, which, if true, would absolve the right hon. Gentleman from the necessity of dealing with that policy on its merits. But within a few weeks of that declaration the right hon. Gentleman had himself laid before his colleagues proposals embodying in some measure—the precise extent was not known to the House generally—the very proposals which he had declared to be outside the range of practical politics. The Prime Minister would not have it suggested that he had laid two inconsistent policies before the Cabinet; he considered that such action was not compatible with political honour; but what could be thought from the point of view of political honour of the conduct which, for the purpose of pacifying a section of the Party, declared a policy to be outside the range of practical politics, and then in the Cabinet did all it could to bring that policy within the range of practical politics? He did not know what the right hon. Gentleman's standard of political propriety might be, but it would not be that of the country at large. The Wharton Amendment declared, first, that the policy of the Government excluded protective or preferential tariffs, and, secondly, that the Unionist Party approved of that exclusion. In neither of those declarations did the bulk of the Tory Party believe, and they were rejected. What courses were then open to the Prime Minister? He was at liberty either to resign office or to resist the policy of the bulk of his followers, and insist on the acceptance by them of his own policy. He did not attempt to follow the latter course, knowing it would be impossible of achievement He took another course, and made a long speech to show that his policy must be treated as consistent with free trade, and then quoted his followers against free trade. They did not mind the right hon. Gentleman saying that his policy excluded protection provided he did not call upon them to believe it. When they were called upon to do that they rejected it.

That, perhaps, was less important than the incident in which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford played the leading part, for they had the phenomenal absurdity of that right hon. Gentleman and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol being in the same division lobby. To get at the significance of this they had to go back to the Sheffield Conference, where the policy of the Party was decided for the purposes of the next election. The hon. Member for Sleaford had charge of an Amendment in favour of food taxation and he could have defeated the Prime Minister, but he did not do it. He withdrew the Amendment, and why? He knew perfectly well that the policy of the Government, if it were an honest policy, would be destructive of the agricultural industry and would lay a burden upon every article the agriculturist used, and leave corn unprotected against foreign competition. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford withdrew his Amendment and supported the Prime Minister, because he knew that policy was a sham, and so far from excluding protection was deliberately designed to bring it about. This policy obtained support on the express ground that the Prime Minister's assurances were not to be believed. He did not know whether the Prime Minister regarded that as consistent with a fair standard of political honour in this country. Protectionists now got not merely guarantees but they were appointed to offices and also got unrestricted authority to preach what propaganda they pleased in favour of protection—an authority which had never been extended to free-trade members of the Cabinet. The right hon. Gentleman was thus maintaining the unity of his Party. Party unity was a fine thing, but they might pay too great a price for it, and the price the Prime Minister was paying showed that he would soon make it a curse to the public life of England.

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University) said that after the extraordinary and novel Parliamentary tactics which had been adopted towards the hon. Member for Oldham he claimed the indulgence of the House to allow him to say a few words. He had been an active member of the Conservative Party for forty years and his experience had been that there had always been a certain number of protectionists in the Party and they were always treated by the Leaders and the majority of the Party with courtesy and consideration. He remembered Sir Stafford Northcote, who was a strong free-trader, always exhorted his followers to show the greatest possible consideration to those who had expressed what he called a pious opinion in favour of protection. The Party supported them on the platform and at elections, and in everything except protectionist Motions, and they never had to complain of any discourtesy on the part of their leaders. Now, things had changed, for some of their leaders were avowed protectionists, and a great number of the followers held protectionist opinions. He made no complaint of that, but what he did contend was that those who did adhere to the old doctrines of the Party had a claim to be treated with the same courtesy and consideration as was shown to protectionists when free-traders were in the ascendency. The Prime Minister had declared that the fiscal policy ought not to be made a test of Party loyalty. They had a right to claim that those who had held in the past the old orthodox opinions, and who still adhered to them, ought not to be treated with discourtesy and want of consideration, and should not be described as persons "who are with us but not of us," and not regarded as unworthy to receive that support and consideration which every member of a Party ought to show towards those who continued loyal to the Party. He apologised to the House for intervening in the debate, but as he was present when the hon. Member for Oldham was treated with the most marked discourtesy, he thought it was only right to say what he had said. The hon. Member for Oldham was the son of an old colleague of his, and an old Leader of the House of Commons, who, of all men in the world, deserved well of his Party, and, if every other consideration had failed, the Member for Oldham's hereditary right to respect and consideration ought to have preserved him from such treatment as he had received at the hands of his Party.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.) drew attention to the insufficient staff which was kept at the Natural History Museum in Dublin. About twenty-five years ago the staff numbered five whilst the staff of the British Museum numbered nineteen. The staff of the latter had since been increased to twenty-five whilst the Dublin Museum staff had only been increased by one, and that was an illusory increase, because three out of the six attendants at the Natural History Museum at Dublin had to give a great deal of time to the College of Science, and in consequence the work of the Museum had fallen fearfully into arrear. Time after time the deficiencies in the present system had been brought to the notice of the Government, and it was time that something was done. The Natural History Department had greatly increased in value, and a great many valuable specimens had been acquired. The staff gave lectures dealing with the work of their departments, and they had helped the History Society, and yet they had to do all this work with the same staff as they had twenty-five years ago, with the result that catalogues were not available, specimens had been accumulating, and the whole business had become clogged for want of proper attendants. Since the Department of Agriculture was established a great deal of extra work had been thrown on the staff of the Natural History Museum. The investigation of the diseases affecting plants and crops had been thrown upon them, and it was utterly impossible to expect the men who, in years gone by, had toiled in looking after and cataloguing specimens should overtake that work. In foreign countries this was a special branch of science which had a department of its own. He sincerely hoped that the Chief Secretary, having had his attention called to the matter year after year, would take it in hand and do something. He asked the right hon. Gentleman whether the time had not come for having a regular inquiry into the art institutions of Dublin. Last year, when the College of Science Bill was brought before the House, an opportunity was given on the Committee stage of raising the question of the position of the Royal Hibernian Academy. The Financial Secretary of the Treasury expressed a favourable opinion then with respect to the claim put forward by himself in regard to that institution. His reason for mentioning it now was that there was great danger that the Metropolitan School of Art, unless proper men were appointed, would not fulfil its proper function, and that it might become merely a school for industrial arts and crafts. These were no doubt extremely necessary for the industrial benefit of the country, but the higher functions of art should also be looked after. The Royal Hibernian Academy was miserably placed on the north side of the city, and was not provided with assistants to enable it to fulful its function. The result was that young men and women who desired to study art were unable to do so in their own country, and had to go to England, France, or Germany. He wished to impress on the right hon. Gentleman that a school of art should not become merely a school of arts and crafts, and that consideration should be given to the proper artistic side of it. He asked the right hon. Gentleman to consider if the time had not come to have an inquiry into the art institutions of Dublin, to see whether they were properly co-ordinated, and whether the work of the different departments was properly carried out. The inquiry, whether departmental or otherwise, should include the Royal Hibernian Academy. If a fair opportunity were given to talented young people to pursue their studies there would be in Ireland in future a school of art distinctly Irish, which would enable the country to take its position in that matter among the nations of the earth.

MR. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.) said he wished to draw attention to the question of the surcharges made by the Local Government Board auditor in connection with the Tipperary Urban Council. There were two sums amounting to £90. The engineer had stopped certain work owing to bad weather, and the auditor surcharged these amounts simply because the council had not reduced to writing the order in connection with that matter. There was another item of £70, which was surcharged in respect of irrecoverable arrears extending over several years; the reason assigned by the auditor for this proceeding being that the council did not take action for the recovery of the rates. He himself had been surcharged £400 by the same gentleman, but when the matter was investigated the decision of the auditor was quashed and every penny of the sum was remitted. This, therefore, was not the first time that that gentleman had been playing "high jinks" in Ireland. The urban council appealed to the Court of King's Bench against the auditor's surcharge, amounting to £160, and the Court decided that he had overstepped his jurisdiction. The result was the auditor's decision was reversed and the £160 allowed; but the urban council had incurred costs in connection with the legal proceedings to the amount of £200, which would fall on the ratepayers unless something could be done to save them from being mulcted in that sum. He should like the Chief Secretary to state who conducted the case. Was it the auditor or the Local Government Board? He understood it was laid down that costs could not be given against the auditor, but the right hon. Gentleman had stated that the Court could have awarded costs against him. Was the right hon. Gentleman going to allow the representative of one of the Government departments in Dublin to act in a perfectly illegal manner, causing serious loss to the ratepayers? This was a question of importance to the ratepayers of Tipperary, but of concern to every public body in Ireland. Was the right hon. Gentlemen going to lay down that any auditor whom the Local Government Board should appoint, might go about the country with perfect impunity, displaying an erratic or vindictive disposition, or even the stupidity which many officials were capable of, and that he was to be safeguarded from any responsibility for his action? It was a monstrous case. He thought that in resenting such treatment the ratepayers would be even more justified in having recourse to passive resistance than those who in this country were resisting by that means the education policy of the Government.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said he admitted that it would be exceedingly difficult to deal with the case of the Tipperary Urban Council after the decision of the King's Bench. The auditor had been for a long time in the service and might be presumed to be a competent auditor. He made two surcharges of expenditure which were supposed to be legal, but were not, and the result of the whole thing]was that the

Tipperary Urban Council had to pay in law costs more than the surcharges themselves. That seemed to be an absurd state of affairs. He wished to ask what was the distinction the Chief Secretary drew between a petition to the Local Government Board from an urban council in regard to a surcharge, and an appeal? He had had something to do with surcharges, and he knew pretty well the principles which governed the English Local Government Board in deciding these cases; and he would like the right hon. Gentleman to tell him wherein a petition of an urban council to the Local Government Board of Ireland differed from an appeal? As he understood, the Irish Local Government Board did not treat the petition of the Tipperary Urban Council as an appeal. This was a serious question. Again, he would like to know on what principle the auditors in Ireland were appointed? In England—he now spoke from personal experience—no auditor was appointed (he quite admitted that no examination or qualification was required) to serve under the Local Government Board who had not been a competent official and had gained experience in his business for twelve or fifteen months. He knew that that was not the case in Ireland. He believed that there was a qualifying examination; but if anyone who knew Ireland would go over the names of the auditors on the list, they would find that these gentlemen had been pitch-forked into their positions by political influence without any qualification. Would the right hon. Gentleman take some action to see that the auditors appointed knew what the law was and what it was not?

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) said he desired to ask the right hon. Gentleman one or two Questions in regard to the action of the police in Dublin; but before doing so, he hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would give some explanation in regard to Dublin Museum. The right hon. Gentleman, he knew, took a good deal of interest in, and had sympathy with, all matters connected with the Royal Irish Academy and Museum, and there should be no difficulty whatever, therefore, in granting additional assistance to the Museum as was asked for by the Royal Irish Academy. The Irish people had not been treated in regard to the Museum with that fairness and generosity which was accorded to similar institutions in this country. As to the surcharges made by the Local Government Board, he really thought that when members of district councils paid money in a *bonâ fide* way to carry out necessary public works, they should not themselves be compelled to refund that money, and that the Local Government Board should remit the surcharge. He quite admitted that where urban or district councils made improper payments they should be surcharged; but in a case where there was no precedent to go by, and where the money had been spent in the public interest, and with no bad intention, he submitted that the Local Government Board ought to have the power to remit the surcharge and not to penalise men who thought they were doing a public duty. It was not always easy to get business men to devote time to public service, and it would be still more difficult if they were made to sacrifice money as well as time when they made a mistake, although acting in a *bonâ fide* manner.

As to the action of the Dublin police, had the right hon. Gentleman any information which he could not give the House the previous day? The right hon. Gentleman said then that the chairman of the meeting on Thursday last had called in the assistance of the police when he believed that the furniture of the hall was in danger and feared that a disturbance would take place. There was nothing in any of the published accounts of the meeting which would justify any such fear. He wanted to know whether any person had a right to command the presence of a large force of police at a public meeting in order to expel people from that meeting who had not been guilty of any breach of the law or of any act of violence? He was advised by letters received that day, that after a resolution had been put at that meeting on Thursday last by the chairman, that gentleman and his friends left the hall and that a new chairman was appointed, whereupon a large force of police entered, objected to the new chairman, and ejected a great number of people from the hall. Nothing had been done which warranted that violent action on the part of the police. He was sure that the right hon. Gentleman had been long enough in Ireland to know that the unnecessary introduction of the police at a meeting was a very dangerous thing; and such action on Thursday night last might easily have led to very serious consequences but for the influence and good judgment of the gentlemen on the platform. He wanted to know from the right hon. Gentleman whether he considered the action of the police on that occasion was within the law. Suppose a free trade meeting was held in England and that a number of protectionists objected to the objects of the promoters, would anyone contend that any individual would dream of sending for the police to expel the protectionists? Such a thing could not happen in England, and it ought not to be allowed to happen in Ireland. That it did happen had aroused a great deal of angry feeling in Dublin. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give the House the law on the matter and say whether the police were acting within their legal right in what they did. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman in his reply to bear in mind that no violence whatever had been used at the meeting before the arrival of the police, and by what right, therefore, did the police act in the manner they did. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be able to give an assurance that such action, which police in England would not dare to take, would not be repeated in Ireland.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover) said that since yesterday he had had an opportunity of studying the legal questions involved in this matter, and he thought he was now in a position to answer the Question of law put by the hon. Member. It was without a shadow of doubt that the owner of such a place as the Ancient Concert Rooms, and equally without doubt that the person who became the owner—that was, the person who hired the rooms and paid for them for an afternoon or evening—was absolutely entitled by the law to call in the police if he apprehended such a disturbance was likely to endanger his property. It was equally certain that the police having been sent for by the chairman of this meeting, who felt that the property for which he was temporarily responsible was in danger, were bound to obey that summons and to come and protect the property. That alone would justify them in taking the steps which they did take, for when the police came in they found a scene somewhat more than heated, though why it should have been heated he could not conceive. But they did find the scene somewhat more heated than anybody would have expected who had studied either the resolutions originally proposed or the amendment which some other person wished to substitute. They found the persons there practically divided into two hostile parties, shouting and menacing each other, and in some cases sticks were raised in the air, and the atmosphere was charged with electricity. A reasonable man might very well have formed an anticipation that, if matters had gone much further, some of the furniture might not only have been damaged, but might also have been used as weapons and missiles. In his opinion the police was not only right in going there, but were well advised in bringing the proceedings to an abrupt close. He understood, having made a careful inquiry, that no unnecessary force was used, that a number of persons were so interested in the view that they wished to express that they would not leave, but that in almost every case they realised the situation and there was no fighting outside. He thought the hon. Member would agree that the Dublin Metropolitan Police had for many years enjoyed and deserved the confidence of all sections of the public in the City of Dublin.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND said he was not making an attack on the police, as such, who were bound to carry out their orders; but the point was, who ordered them?

MR. WYNDHAM said he thought he had cleared up that point. The person who for the time being was the owner of the hall and responsible for it, was entitled to call them in and they were bound to give assistance.

With regard to the remarks of the hon. Member for South Kerry, pressing for some addition to the staff of the natural history section of the National Museum, the hon. Member reminded them that in consequence of efforts made, also at his instance, a considerable addition had been made recently to the staff in the National Library. He fully admitted the excellence of that building and the other buildings, which formed one of the most interesting features of Dublin, but additional staff could not be sanctioned without very careful inquiry, and it was not from any remissness on his part that no conclusion had yet been arrived at. The new Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction were the proper Department to make a preliminary examination and say if additions could be made in one place and proper economies effected in another, and when they had concluded their preliminary examination, of course the Treasury sanction must be obtained. A correspondence on that subject was proceeding; it had not been concluded, and until a conclusion had been reached it was clear he could not make any further statement. He thought these institutions in Dublin should be adequately supported, but he differed from the hon. Member and thought that Dublin was already very fortunately endowed in that respect. He knew of no city of that size in Europe which had such a collocation of buildings showing such interesting exhibits. The archæological and the natural history sections of the Museum did the greatest credit to those who attended to those departments and the National Gallery on an adjoining site was also a great centre of public interest in Dublin. That being so, the hon. Member might rest assured that those who were responsible for the maintenance of those buildings would do what in them lay to see that as much as could properly be expended should be expended on those matters. He would bear in mind his observation upon the Metropolitan School of Art, though he should not pledge himself wholly that a separate school of instruction in art was always the best way to foster artistic talent. A collection of the best examples of the greatest in art was in one sense a better method of instruction, and in the National Gallery they had a collection of great masters which he hoped and believed would exercise a great influence.

As for the inquiry of the hon. Member for South Tipperary, he used some phrases which might lead the House to believe that any auditor was, as it were, the servant and agent of the Local Government Board. That was not so. The auditor must be independent if he was to be of any value at all, and he was bound to look through accounts and with the knowledge of the law at his command to say this or that item was not a legal item of expenditure. It would never do for a public Department to direct an auditor what items he was to pass. It was less necessary in respect to the Local Government Board in Ireland, because there was an appeal from the auditor to the Local Government Board, not only on questions of law but also on what were called questions of equity. So that if an auditor quite legally said that an expenditure ought not to have been incurred, the parties who held themselves aggrieved could feel that the Local Government Board were able to say that, however that might be from the point of view of the law, equitably they were not to blame. And in such a case the Local Government Board could, in fact, grant relief. But there could not be an indefinite number of appeals and, as a matter of fact, under the Statute there were alternative appeals. The parties surcharged might either appeal to the Court of King's Bench Division and say they were right and the auditor wrong in law, or they might pursue the other course of appealing to the Local Government Board, and they might make that appeal both on the law and also on the merits, and the language of the Statute was so wide as to justify the Local Government Board in giving relief whenever a public body had acted in complete good faith, without carelessness and ignorance, and that dispensing power of the Local Government Board had often been used, and more than once when the question had been brought before him he had expressed personal consent and approval. And he believed that public bodies would, as a rule—though perhaps not always—be well advised in appealing to the Local Government Board rather than in going to law. The surcharge was made in September, and no objection was taken in any way until proceedings were begun in December.

Then, it was true, the parties aggrieved wrote to the Local Government Board, and it was said that from the tone of the reply they gathered that they would not get relief. When the matter went to the King's Bench the Local Government Board were off the scene of action altogether. The King's Bench found for the local body, but, having the right to give or not to give costs, did not give them, and the Local Government Board had no funds out of which to pay costs when they were not awarded against them. He would take such steps as might be feasible in order to see that local bodies in Ireland should be fully advised that there was an alternative appeal.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston), referring to the outbreak of plague at Johannesburg, said that, when speaking on the subject the other day, he urged on the Colonial Secretary the necessity of insisting strenuously on having full information from Johannesburg, for he had reason to suppose that the authorities in that city had been keeping the matter dark for a long period. He said this because of the unprecedented severity of the outbreak. It was so sudden and appalling that it must have had some antecedent condition which led up to it, and there might be some doubt as to whether the high death rate among the natives last year was really pneumonia, as was stated. He now desired to warn the Colonial Secretary and to ask him to insist on more thorough information in the future. He had seen the report of the medical officer of health for the year ending last June, and he thought it should be studied most carefully in the Colonial Office. It appeared from that report that throughout last year there were most suspicious cases in Johannesburg—so suspicious that the ordinary observer almost must have been forced to the conclusion that they were cases of plague. In addition it appeared that at the same time a large number of rats were dying all over the city, and, with these two signs occurring at the same time, he thought that the responsible Minister at home ought to have been supplied with full information so that he might have taken steps to save human life. On 2nd May, after these events, the Lieutenant-Governor telegraphed to say that there was no foundation for the rumours of the existence of plague in the city, and that showed how the matter had been kept dark. The sole ground on which that statement was made was that though the bodies of some persons who had died in a suspicious way had been examined, the bacillus of plague had not been discovered. The nemesis of that telegram came the other day; and he would ask the right hon. Gentlemen to take care to prevent any further attempts to conceal the gravity of the outbreak, and also to give to the public the fullest information he could during the ensuing week, and to telegraph to the authorities at Johannesburg insisting on the fullest information being given to him as to the progress of this epidemic.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. LYTTELTON, Warwick and Leamington) said that in consequence of what the hon. Member said the other day he had sent a telegram to Lord Milner asking him for information. Lord Milner, in reply, telegraphed on 26th March that it did not seem to be realised that extensive Government laboratories existed and that a bacteriological laboratory under first-rate specialists, with skilled assistants, had been on the lookout for the plague for months. Great numbers of dead rats had been examined. During six months thirteen rats had been found to have died of plague. Each of these cases was specially investigated, and no possible connection could be traced between any two of them. The conclusion was that the rats were transported individually from the coast. The Government laboratories had also devoted the greatest attention to pneumonia, which was a very common disease there among mine workers. Many scores of cases had been bacteriologically examined, but no trace of plague was found in any one of them. It was impossible that the same specialists who were on the look out for plague, studying all these cases of pneumonia, should have failed to detect the plague bacillus in a single case, if what had been thought to be pneumonia had really been plague. This was all the more certain because it was only bacteriological examination which revealed the plague when it arrived. The present epidemic had so far only appeared at Johannesburg, at Pretoria, where there was one case in the hospital, and in one other place. Machinery was ready for taking measures immediately on the notification of cases of plague. The place in which the epidemic had occurred was surrounded by a cordon, and natives were being removed as quickly as possible. During the eight days since the outbreak of the epidemic only three fresh cases had occurred among the inhabitants of the cordon area. A committee was giving its attention to the matter, and strongly recommended that the old Indian location, which formed part of the insanitary area, should be burned to the ground. The disinfection of all compounds was being thoroughly carried out. All rats were being killed as quickly as possible, and stray dogs and cats were being exterminated. Lord Milner was perfectly satisfied that the precautions which were being taken were as comprehensive as possible. The gentleman who was acting as medical officer had a number of excellent medical assistants, the majority of whom had had experience of the plague. This telegram, he thought, made any additional statement unnecessary.

MR. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland) drew attention to the report that the mission to Tibet was now to advance, and asked for information regarding the intentions of the Government. The advance would probably take place during the holidays and he would like to know whether it was proposed to advance as far as Lhasa or how far it was intended to advance. He further desired to know when the mission contemplated returning and what the Government intended to do. Their chief object was to help Indian trade.

*MR. SPEAKER called the hon. Member's attention to the fact that there was a notice on the Paper dealing with the question of Tibet which precluded the merits of the expedition being now discussed.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford) said the object of the expedition was clearly set forth in the Papers laid before Parliament, and the limitations of the mission were also clearly laid down. The position was this. The Government had causes of complaint which were enumerated in the Blue-book, and the suzerain Power, China, was anxious that we should have a meeting with her representative in order to settle disputed points. The Chinese Government had successively named two places for a meeting in Tibet, but their representative had not appeared. There was every reason to believe that the delays had been due to his being prevented from obtaining the necessary transport. In the circumstances it was thought necessary to make the advance to Gyangtse, with a view to reaching a place where there was a prospect of a satisfactory arrangement being concluded. The patience of the British representatives and the pacific character of the mission had been amply demonstrated. The mission halted for a long period on entering Tibet, and the further advance was not determined upon until it was made perfectly clear that the Tibetans intended to boycott the mission at the point which it had then reached. The advance had been carried out so far with apparently the greatest friendliness from the Tibetan people. Such hindrance as had been met with had apparently proceeded from the central authority at Lhasa. It was necessary to provide the mission with a suitable guard. Precisely the same precaution had been found necessary by the Chinese envoy. The time had come when the mission must go forward, and nothing had reached the Government to show that there was any such apprehension as would necessitate reinforcements. The Government were determined to keep the operation, or whatever it might be called, within bounds. They had no desire to molest the Tibetans or force upon them anything savouring of military occupation, and they had no design on Tibetan territory. He hoped the steps which were now being taken would lead to a pacific arrangement, and to an agreement which might be observed by all parties.

SIR ROBERT REID (Dumfries Burghs) said he very much regretted that the House was prevented from discussing the subject of the Tibetan expedition by reason of the fact that a Motion dealing with the question had been set down by a private Member on the other side. The result of the Rule was that the House might be prevented from discussing questions of the most vital importance by the uncontrolled caprice or design of an individual Member. He did not know what the source of the Motion was in this case; but they might fairly assume that the Government could have some little influence in preventing its being retained on the Paper if they desired to exercise it. He would ask them whether they would use their influence in the matter if some responsible member of the Opposition, not necessarily on the Front Bench, desired to raise a discussion.

MR. POWER (Waterford, E.) said that three years ago he asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland if he could extend the provisions of the Allotments Act to Ireland. Those Acts had done much good in England; and he suggested that a provision extending them to Ireland might be included in the Labourers Bill which was to be introduced after Easter. The right hon. Gentleman might very easily extend the Allotment Acts that prevailed in this country to Ireland. Anyone who had been in the Midlands would recognise that those Acts had done immense good to the working class community and a good many persons were now supplementing their wages very considerably by the cultivation of these plots of land, and this would be a great benefit to those living in Irish towns.

*MR. SPEAKER: I must remind the hon. Member that the Motion for adjournment is not an occasion for advocating legislation.

MR. POWER said he would not pursue his remarks any further, but would simply ask the right hon. Gentleman to convey to the Chief Secretary for Ireland what he thought was the universal desire of those sitting on the Irish Benches upon this question.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY (Sir A. ACLAND-HOOD, Somersetshire, Wellington) said that he was quite prepared to use his influence if the hon. and learned Gentleman would put his Motion on the Paper. Of course, he would see what he could do, but the hon. Member knew that many members in the Ministerial Party were extremely obstinate.

Question put, and agreed to.

And, there being no further Business set down for this Afternoon's Sitting, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair till this Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING

POLICE (IRELAND).

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) said the subject to which he wished to draw attention was a vast and comprehensive one, and one upon which Irishmen felt very keenly. The Resolution itself was an exposition of his case, and as a great many Members wished to address the House upon the matter, he would merely, in the briefest manner, give a few illustrations, and leave others to discuss the Resolution. One of the greatest difficulties Irishmen had to surmount in bringing matters of any sort before this House was the fact that in an Irish Act identical words in an English Act were clothed with an entirely different meaning. For instance, in the eyes of an Englishman a policeman was always regarded as a courteous person and a guardian of the public, but in Ireland it was quite a different matter. In England the policeman was pre-eminently a civil servant, governed by those who were themselves the representatives of the people; in Ireland he was the master of the people, and the servant and drudge of a Government which was antagonistic to the people in every respect. The Royal Irish Constabulary was a unique institution, and were, practically, soldiers constantly under drill at the depôt, and reviewed twice a year, when it was customary to compliment them on their soldierly appearance and behaviour. They were armed, not with staves, but with the most deadly weapons of modern warfare, which they used against the common enemy—the Irish people. It was ridiculous to speak of them as a civil force; they were not police at all, but an army of occupation, placed in Ireland in absolute violation of the Bill of Rights, which forbade a standing army being maintained in Ireland. When the right hon. Member for East Fife was visiting the right hon. Member for Montrose, then Chief Secretary, he went to the depôt and found members of the Royal Irish Constabulary being examined in questions of law which he himself admitted he should have some difficulty in answering offhand. He, in 1892, had characterised that class in law as a class designed for perjury, and how true that was the cases of Sullivan, O'Halloran, and many others in the same category would show. A very curious fact with regard to Ireland was that in proportion to the population the number of police was five times greater than that of England, and a still more curious thing was that as the population of Ireland had decreased the number of police had proportionately increased, clearly showing that the police were not for the preservation but the destruction of the people.

There were two police forces in Ireland, the Royal Irish Constabulary and the Dublin Metropolitan Police Force, which was established in 1836, and the cost of the maintenance of those forces now amounted to 7s. per head of the population, while the cost of the police in England was only 2s. per head. In Ireland they had one policeman to 250 of the population, whilst the proportion in Great Britain was one policeman to 1,200 of the population. He had now shown that they were not only an over-manned, but also an over-armed force. The reply given him in answer to his Question as to the cost of the Irish Constabulary was technically correct, but the figure of £1,361,419 should be increased by about a third to cover the cost of pensions. The Dublin Metropolitan Police had a curious organisation, and under a Statute a rate of 8d. in the pound was levied on the city for maintenance, in addition to public grants. The amount levied was £42,000, with an additional 5 per cent. for collection. It was one of the most costly forces in the three kingdoms, and the cost increased by leaps and bounds. It might be supposed that the force would be under the control of the local authority but it was not so; the Lord Mayor of Dublin, the highest magistrate in Ireland, the highest officer under the Lord-Lieutenant, could not order or direct a single policeman in the force, and, in order to prevent identification, whenever the police were employed upon duty in the country the numbers were removed from their uniforms. He concluded by moving the Resolution of which he had given notice.

Mr. **WILLIAM REDMOND** (Clare, E.) seconded the Motion. It was a remarkable fact that in every year since 1836 there had been a protest from Irish Members against the composition and character of the Royal Irish Constabulary. Invariably the protest had been on three grounds; that the force was too numerous, that it was far too costly, and that in reality it was an armed military force and not a police force. Look at the difference between the police forces in Ireland and Great Britain. So far as he had been able to compare the two countries, there was in Great Britain—England, Wales, and Scotland—one policeman for every 1,200 of the population, and in Ireland there was one policeman to about every 250 persons. Then, as to the question of cost, he found that, roughly speaking, in England the cost of maintaining the police was 2s. 4d. per head of the population; in Scotland it was 2s. 2½d.; while in Ireland it was as nearly as possible 7s. per head. Now he thought it would be admitted that these figures were quite sufficient to show that there was good reason for the dissatisfaction and discontent which prevailed in Ireland as to the character of the police force in that country. Of course, hon. Gentlemen who represented English constituencies might say that there was some special reason why Ireland should be more extensively and more expensively policed than Great Britain. They might be told that there was a great deal more crime to be coped with, and that the duties of the police were much more difficult. But these statements were in the last degree inaccurate. Several Committees had been appointed to inquire into the matter. The Committee which sat in 1901 was presided over by the hon. and gallant Gentleman the present Member for Sheffield, and in their Report some very extraordinary and interesting statements were made in regard to the Irish police, as to the character of the work done by them, and the alleged prevalence of crime in Ireland. On page 23 of that Report it was stated—

> "While it is true that political agitation has kept the Irish constabulary on the alert, there is practically no criminal class at all."

And yet it was beyond contradiction that in Ireland there were five times as many police as in Great Britain, and that the cost was 7s. per head in that country as compared with 2s. 4d. in England, and 2s. 2½d. in Scotland. And it was stated that there should be more police in Ireland, because the duties they had to perform were more serious and dangerous than in this country. He referred to page 24 of the Report of the Committee, which stated—

> "We are unable to accept the statement that the discharge of police duties involves greater danger than in England; the contrary is the fact."

And attention was drawn in the Report to the fact that, in the course of the ten years immediately preceding, only seven policemen had been obliged to retire from active service in consequence of injury incurred in the discharge of their duties. That statement was not taken from the imagination of Irish representatives, but from the impartial Report of a Committee of this House, and it sufficiently proved that there was nothing abnormal in the state of Ireland to call for the extraordinarily large and expensive police force.

The real cause for the existence of such a large police force in Ireland was not the prevalence of crime, but the extraordinary land system, which had given rise to more agrarian agitation than in any other country in Europe. He might be allowed to read two or three sentences from a speech delivered by John Bright twenty-four years ago in a debate in this House on the police force in Ireland. Mr. Bright, while he sympathised with the Irish Members, could not agree that the time had arrived for a large curtailment of the police force in Ireland, and made some statements which should have interest to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary in view of the attempts he had made to deal with the Irish land question. Mr. Bright said—

> "It is a different force from anything we have in this country for the preservation of the peace; but it seems to me to be, in the present condition of Ireland, almost a necessary incident to that condition; and the fact that it is necessary, if it be necessary, is a proof of how much there is required to be done by changing the whole social condition of the great mass of the tenantry of Ireland."

And Mr. Bright made a further statement which was of interest at the present moment, when they were trying to promote a system of land purchase—

> "We have now a condition of things which it is impossible to continue without disorder. We have 500,000 or nearly 600,000 tenants of the soil, who are really in a condition of tenants at will; and we have, on the other side, about 10,000 proprietors, one-half of whom are absentees. . . . I am of opinion that in this single fact of 500,000 tenants looking in the face of 10,000 proprietors is to be found the whole of the evils which afflict that country, and that in a change of that condition, and in that change only, lies the remedy which Parliament can provide."

And then Mr. Bright went on to say that the protest which the Irish Members had made in regard to the Royal Irish Constabulary was a reasonable one, and that—

> "The time must come—I hope it may come soon—when the police system of Ireland may be placed on a footing as judicious and conformable to our notions of freedom as the police systems of England and Scotland."

These were most interesting statements in view of the recent developments of the Irish land question; and he asked the Chief Secretary whether he did not consider, in view of what had taken place in regard to land purchase, a very large and substantial decrease might not be made in the numbers and cost of the police force in Ireland. He was glad to see that in the Estimates there was a decrease of £52,000 in the cost of the Royal Irish Constabulary. They knew also that the right hon. Gentleman had promised that recruiting would be stopped as soon as he considered it consistent with the safety of Ireland; but he submitted that the right hon. Gentleman might proceed far more rapidly than the Estimates indicated. There was no reason in the wide world why a considerable reduction should not be made immediately in the numbers of the

Royal Irish Constabulary, and that the money so saved should not be spent in better directions, such as the encouragement of industry and the improvement of agriculture. There was nothing more sad than the fact that while the population of Ireland had been steadily and rapidly decreasing, the cost of the police force had been increasing. In 1859–60 there were 6,000,000 of people in Ireland, and the cost of the Royal Irish Constabulary was then £700,000. There were now only 4,500,000 people in Ireland, and yet the cost of the police was nearly double — it was £1,300,000. He ventured to say that even the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary would admit that the expenditure of such a large sum of money on the police force in Ireland was little short of a scandal, and it was a condemnation of the strongest character of the nature of the government of Ireland by this country for so many years past.

There was one other matter to which he wished to refer, and that was the question of control. The police force in Ireland were not only too numerous and costly, but they were absolutely out of the control of the people. Nothing could tend more to discontent, dissatisfaction, and extravagance than the divorce of the police from the popular control of the representatives of the people. He ventured to say that if the Irish people were allowed to equip and control their own police force, one half the present number would be more than sufficient for all purposes. The hon. Member for Donegal had referred to the Metropolitan Police in Dublin. It was an outrage and a scandal that the citizens of a city like Dublin should be taxed for the maintenance of a large police force there, and should not have the slightest voice in the control or management of it. That was a state of affairs altogether out of keeping with the spirit of the age, although it might have done well enough a hundred years ago. The Irish people were now considered capable of managing their local affairs, and surely they ought to be permitted to control the raising, the payment, and the management of their police forces. There was another point to which he must refer before sitting down. He did not hesitate to say that it was a scandalous danger to arm the police force with rifles and bayonets. Even the right hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh would, he was sure, in fairness admit that for a very long time past there had been no necessity for arming the police in Ireland with rifles and bayonets. They remembered that some years ago an unarmed and unoffending people had been shot down at Mitchelstown, and that the magistrate had called upon the police then and there not to hesitate to shoot. But of late years the people had not been fired upon because there was no necessity for anything of the kind, and therefore the arming of the police was nothing but a menace. Everbody knew that the Irish were an excitable race, and the right hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh was as excitable as any one of them. To put rifles and bayonets in the hands of the police was a premium to disturbance. The police were forced into election contests, and the result was rioting. He remembered on one occasion the people disarmed the police, and kept their rifles and bayonets until the election was over, and then restored them. He had had a long experience of public meetings in Ireland, and had seen many breaches of the peace and exciting scenes, and he could honestly say, whatever the right hon. Gentleman might think, that he had over and over again dreaded to see bloodshed, because the police had rifles in their hands. He insisted that, even in the excitement of an election, the police could do all that was necessary to be done without being armed with rifles and bayonets.

It was said that the cost of the Royal Irish Constabulary was not borne on the rates, but was paid from Imperial funds. Of course that was true, but the Irish people made their contribution to the Imperial funds, amounting to £10,000,000, and to take £1,500,000 of that sum for the maintenance of an unnecessary police force was little better than a scandal. The right hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh complained the other night that he could not obtain money for the drainage of the Bann Valley. There was not a Nationalist Member who had not over and over again pointed out the necessity for expenditure in that and other directions. All along the shores of Ireland there were harbours useless for want of expenditure of a little money. Industries were decaying, townships were disappearing, all because there was no money to promote the welfare of the people; and yet they were asked to spend nearly £1,500,000 on a police force armed as if they were soldiers, a force which, according to the Report of the Select Committee, had no work to do in the true sense of the word. He appealed to the Chief Secretary to give some hope that, under the new state of affairs in regard to the transfer of land, there would be a sweeping reform of the police of Ireland, that their numbers would be reduced, and that their control would be transferred to the local authorities. He appealed to the right hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh to join in the attempt of the Irish Party to have the large sums now devoted to a costly and useless force utilised for the promotion of the industries, welfare, and prosperity of the country to which he and they belonged.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House strongly condemns the attitude of the Government in neglecting the introduction of legislation for the purpose of bringing under the control of popularly elected bodies, as in the cases of the police force in Great Britain, the Royal Irish Constabulary, and the Dublin Metropolitan Police, and declares that the exemption of these overmanned and armed forces from such control and the vesting of all control over them in the Executive Government is a standing menace to the liberty of the subject, a cause of enhanced and unnecessary public expenditure, and attended with frequent infraction of Common Law rights and grave scandals in the administration of the Criminal Law in Ireland."—(*Mr. Swift MacNeill.*)

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) said he imagined it was the last vote of want of confidence in the Government before Easter. He quite forgot how many they had had already. Some interesting figures had been given in support of the Motion. It took, it appeared, one policeman to manage 1,200 Englishmen or Scotsmen, but it took one policeman to manage 200 Irishmen. He had always regarded the Irish as a lively people and somewhat difficult to manage. In his horse-riding days some of the hardest pullers were the best horses, therefore he did not think that told against the Irish race. He had been a Member of that House for twenty-nine years. He was first elected in 1865. During that time he had seen a very marked improvement in the conduct of public business. This had happened because it was found so difficult to manage eighty-two Irishmen. He remembered when Mr. Gladstone brought in his Home Rule Bill, he said that the great fault of the law in Ireland was that it was not in sympathy with the Irish people. Apparently hon. Members opposite held the same view. They believed that the police did not sympathise with the people as they ought to do, and that if they transferred authority over the Irish force to the county councils they would be in more direct sympathy with the Irish people. To be more accurate he would say some of the Irish people. He agreed with the hon. Member for East Clare that Irishmen had a right to be proud of the fact that crime in its ordinary sense was much less prevalent in Ireland than in England, Scotland, or Wales. But Irishmen did not always hold the same idea of what crime meant. In this country, if one man differed from another in politics, cut his head open and knocked him down, he was looked upon as a man who had committed a crime. But it was not always regarded in the same light in Ireland. The Irishman took a different view of it from the unimaginative Englishman. No doubt if the police had been, in a case brought before him, in entire sympathy with the offenders he would never have had it brought before him. Both parties had black eyes, their faces were covered with blood, their clothes entirely covered with mud. The police gave evidence as to the crime they had committed. They had started fighting at the top of the street at Belturbet. One knocked the other down. He got up and performed exactly the same operation on his assailant. This was repeated until they arrived opposite the police station, where they fell into the hands of the unsympathetic police. When asked what they had to say in defence, one said: "Your worship, we were helping each other home."

It had been said that in former times there were fewer police in proportion to the population. Undoubtedly it was so. The reason why the police force had been increased was because the political passions of the people had been aroused. To make the life of the land grabber a burden and to injure him in various ways was not regarded as a crime, but as part of the political campaign. Fortunately, the law was not framed by an Irish Parliament and it became necessary, to prevent tyranny and maintain freedom, to increase the number of the police. But the blame rested with those who chose to run Irish politics on lines which led to what he called crime. How was it to be remedied? By bringing the Irish constabulary into sympathy with the Irish people. How, he wondered, would the police be selected? He concluded if the police were placed under the local authorities, they would be chosen in the same way as dispensary doctors, road contractors, or any other person required to do work, and the local authority were chosen simply and solely for political reasons. He was glad hon. Members opposite admitted that would be the case. He did not suppose there would be any deep scrutiny into a candidate's character or capacity so long as he was a good Nationalist. Would that be a satisfactory basis on which to found a force to maintain law and order? He thought not. On the contrary, a police force so chosen would be the worst conceivable and the most untrustworthy.

Mr. ROCHE (Galway, E.) asked if it were not a fact that the majority of the police were sons of small tenant farmers.

Colonel SAUNDERSON said he had no objection to small tenant farmers. They were an extremely respectable class. He did not see why their sons should not be in the constabulary. As a matter of fact the great majority of the policemen in Ireland were Roman Catholics, and if they were not policemen they would probably be supporters of hon. Gentlemen opposite. Instead of being their supporters, however, they sometimes had them in charge. To place the police absolutely under the authority of hon. Gentlemen opposite, who were the rulers in every county in Ireland except the North-east of the country, would lead to the members of the force being chosen simply because they were stalwart Nationalists. He remembered the Member for North Louth said some years ago that the condition of Ireland was one of chronic rebellion tempered by the absence of firearms. What the hon. Member for South Donegal desired, apparently, was to create a nice little Nationalist army, drilled, disciplined, and under their immediate and absolute authority. He had not that trust in the hon. Member and his friends that he would like to see such a state of affairs, seeing they had candidly declared that England's extremity would be Ireland's opportunity, and had invariably shown their inveterate hatred of Britain by taking the part of her foes. They had in the past taken the side of the Mahdi and the Mullah, and he noticed that in America the supporters of the Nationalists had now taken the side of Russia—the land of liberty! Having shown in the most unmistakable way that they desired the ruin of Great Britain, and desired to cut Ireland adrift from connection with it, the House of Commons would be blind indeed if it handed over an armed force to the control of the county councils, who were absolutely under the thumb of Nationalist Members. He did not think the House of Commons had got to such a state of imbecility yet. Therefore he could not join hon. Members opposite in this vote of censure on the Government. He and his friends sometimes differed from the Government. [An Hon. Member: When you want money.] They were all ready to seek money from a richer country to help a poor country like Ireland, but although hon. Gentlemen opposite might agree with him on that point they would not get recruits from the Unionists for this Motion. Their differences with the Government sank into absolute insignificance when they came to judge the question by a higher and more important standard. He was a very bad Party man in one sense. A hon. Member said the other day that he had once been a Liberal. He would like to know whether by any microscopic examination they could distinguish between Liberals and Conservatives. All the great Radical measures passed in this country during the last twenty years had been the work of a Conservative Government. The words Liberal and Conservative meant very little to him. He understood the words Home-Ruler and Nationalist, and when a vote of censure was moved by a Nationalist upon the Government it became the duty of himself, and those who thought with him, to vote against that Resolution and against the substitution of a Home-Rule Government for the Gentlemen who now sat on the Treasury Bench, who were, at any rate, pledged to the maintenance of the integrity of the British Empire.

MR. MOONEY (Dublin County, S.) said that yesterday they had heard that the Ulster Unionist Members were in full revolt against the Government, and had presented an ultimatum to the Chief Secretary. Twenty hours had elapsed, and he could only come to the conclusion that the Government had surrendered, because the right hon. Gentleman who had just spoken had delivered a long speech intended for his constituents in Ulster, justifying his position. He thought it was a scandal, if he might use such a strong expression, that on the discussion of a Motion which involved a large sum of public money the only representative of Irish Government present was the Attorney-General who—he did not use the phrase personally or offensively—was himself a glorified policeman. The Chief Secretary was the "Pooh Bah" of Irish politics; he was the head of every Department, and yet did not think it worth while to be present. [Mr. WYNDHAM here entered the House.] He was glad to see that the right hon. Gentleman was now present. The right hon. Gentleman had admitted that he had discovered in the Irish Administration many channels of wasteful and ridiculous expenditure and promised many reforms. He should like to call attention to the Dublin Metropolitan Police which, having regard to the area it served, was the most expensive police force in the world. If the right hon. Gentleman reduced the cost of the Metropolitan Police he would strongly object to the saving being put into the Development Grant. It should be applied to its proper source, the reduction of taxation in Ireland. In the matter of the cost of the police Ireland had certainly got the worst of the bargain. Originally the tax was not to exceed £13,000 a year, now it was £51,000, 100 per cent. higher than in any English or Scotch constituency. And while Dublin had to pay this large sum they had no control over the force. In Glasgow the cost per head of population for police was 3s. 5d., in Bradford 2s. 9d., in Liverpool 5s. 7d.—(and there the police acted also as the Fire Brigade)—while in Dublin it was no less than 8s. 2½d. per head. The Dublin police were, in his opinion, the finest force he had ever set eyes upon, and he had visited most of the great cities of the world, but he regretted to say that their appearance was being spoiled by the supply of a uniform half way between that of a German bandsman and a Salvation Army sergeant. The necessity for public control had been evidenced by the occurrences of the last few days, a peaceable meeting of citizens having been dispersed by violence. Had there been public control, an inquiry would have been held by the representatives of the ratepayers, but now all that was being done was a sham sort of investigation in a back room at Dublin Castle, just sufficient to enable the Chief Secretary to say a few months hence that an inquiry was held and that the police were absolved from all blame Those who paid for the maintenance of the police ought to have some voice in their control. In conclusion, he could only express a hope that the Chief Secretary would, in pursuance of a policy of retrenchment and reform, bring about a reduction in this expensive force.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.) regretted that the hon. Member for South Donegal could not have found it possible to enforce his contention without making wholesale charges against the conduct and character of the Irish Constabulary. He alluded to them as part spies, part agents, and part provokers of crime. There was not the slightest justification for that. After all, who were the Irish Constabulary? They were the sons of small farmers in Ireland. They were well conducted when in the police, and when they retired into private life they were most worthy and deserving, honest and industrious members of society. He did not say that in a large force of 12,000 men there were not some black sheep, but to make these wholesale infamous charges against them was most unfair. They were officered by strangers to the locality in which they were stationed. They were officered by many Englishmen, by many Irishmen, by many graduates of Oxford and Cambridge; and the result was that so good was the training and the conduct of the entire force that at the present moment some of the largest towns and cities in England selected their chief constables from the officers of the Irish Constabulary. He thought one of the chief officers in the City of London was originally an inspector in the Irish Constabulary, and so were the Chief Constables of Birmingham, Liverpool and, he thought, Manchester. The hon. Member for East Clare was more moderate, and he based his support of the Resolution upon three grounds. First of all, the numbers of the constabulary; secondly, their expense, and thirdly the fact that they were not under the control of the local body. It might be interesting to the hon. Member to give the decrease which had gone on already in the force. In 1882–3, the number of officers and men was 13,523. Its cost was £1,573,209; in 1892–3 it was down to 12,527 men and £1,400,000 cost; in 1902–3 it was down to 11,192, at a cost of £1,361,000; and for 1904–5 the estimate was for 10,383 men, at a cost of £1,389,680. This from 1882 to 1904 was a decrease of 3,200 odd, and if the reductions contemplated were carried out the force would be down to 8,000; but it was perfectly impossible to reduce it abruptly without doing gross injustice to the individual policeman, because they would either have to pension them off immediately, without getting out of them the services they were capable of rendering, or turn them on the world. Recruiting, however, was in a great degree stopped; and reductions in the metropolitan police of Dublin was also proceeding, but not in the same degree. In the rural parts of Ireland there was practically no crime of fraud, and as 75 per cent of the crime of violence was due to intemperance it was suggested that the control of the police should be handed over to the local bodies; but these bodies were only created in 1898, and hon. Members opposite would scarcely have advocated handing the control of the police to the Grand Juries. Therefore, if there had been any neglect at all, it had only been since 1898. No one realised more than he the extraordinary way in which the county councils of Ireland had answered the call made upon them, and had discharged the duties imposed upon them, but he thought it was well not to be in too great a hurry, and county councils must learn to walk before they ran. The history of the control of the police was rather interesting. It seemed to be assumed that in England the control of the police was given to the county councils. That was an error, for the force was managed through joint committees. It was interesting to look back and find what was thought of the control of the police by local bodies before 1836. He had referred to the debate in which Lord Morpeth introduced the Act of that year. Prior to 1836 the police in Ireland were under the control of the magistrates, and that system was universally condemned on the ground that they allowed local feeling and prejudice to influence them. It was found that 90 per cent. of the force were members of secret societies. In the debate Mr. O'Connell cited instances in which constables gave vent to seditious cries against the Pope; in the North, in fact, the force was composed of extreme Orangemen, while in the South they displayed their partisanship on the other side. What was peculiar in the debate was that when Lord Morpeth proposed to place the control of the force in the hands of a body not liable to be influenced by local circumstances, Mr. O'Connell approved and Henry Grattan blessed it.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Henry Grattan had then been dead many years. He died in 1820.

Mr. ATKINSON: This was no doubt Henry Grattan's son whose speech was reported and who blessed the Government for having introduced the Bill.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND said that what O'Connell and Mr. Henry Grattan spoke of was placing the control of the police with the magistrate. Nobody now proposed to do that, and what they suggested was that they should be controlled by a local representative authority.

Mr. ATKINSON said that prior to 1836 the police in Ireland were under the control of the magistrates, who allowed local feeling and prejudice to influence them. What this Resolution conveyed was that the control to be established in Ireland over the police was to be the same as that established in England, and in that case the joint control would be vested in the magistrates and in the county council. He was endeavouring to show that the magistrates in Ireland had allowed local feeling and local prejudice to influence them in their selection. If the control of the police was now vested in the local authorities, either alone or jointly with the magistrates, there would be the same influence that existed in 1836, and, in the present condition of Ireland, there would be no guarantee that the police force, if managed by local bodies, would give protection and fair play to the unpopular minority in the various districts. It was on that ground that in 1836 this central force was created to be managed and controlled by those who would be unaffected by those local prejudices. It was difficult to see at what period it would have been the duty of the Government to have made that change. Nobody suggested that, concurrently with the establishment of local government in Ireland, the police force ought to have been vested in the county council, jointly with the magistrates. Whether the time might eventually come, nobody could reasonably contend that it had arrived, and therefore the Government could not be blamed for not coming to a decision to transfer the police to the local authority.

Mr. WOLFF (Belfast, E.) said as the representative of a northern constituency he was always glad when an opportunity happened to be able to join with hon. Members opposite, but the Motion before the House was not one on which he could join with them. The Nationalist Members wished to have the police force put under the control of the local bodies, or, in other words, the county councils, because in England and Scotland the police were under the control of those bodies. In asking for that they seemed to forget that in Ireland the conditions were totally different to those which existed in Great Britain; Ireland was unfortunately divided. There was a majority of Nationalists and Catholics, and a strong minority of Protestants and Unionists, and they looked upon each other with a certain amount of animosity and with a want of confidence in each other. They had had a good many riots in Belfast in his time and the police had been obliged to interfere, but he had never known an occasion when the police had acted, during a riot, against Catholics without those Catholics charging them with partiality and unfairness. The same applied also when they acted against Protestants. How much more would this be so if the police were under the county councils? The hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh had told the House how some of the county councils were in the habit of selecting those who were employed by them for nothing else but the services they had rendered to the Nationalist cause in Ireland. He was afraid that even in the North of Ireland political reasons would operate in the selection of the policemen, and he was afraid, too, that any police force selected in that way—not for their efficiency but for their political opinions—would not be a fair police force but one of the worst forces they could have anywhere. The hon. Member for South Donegal had said that policemen gave their evidence with a view to what advancement they could get in the force. He did not see, if the police was taken away from Government control and put into the county council's hands, what difference it would make. The other great complaints made by hon. Members opposite was of the numbers of the police and the great expense, but he did not know whether a decrease or an increase affected Ireland much, for it was paid out of the Consolidated Fund. As the irritation between landlords and tenants died away under the operation of the Land Act there would be less need for a large force than there was now. Hon. Members opposite should have a little patience and see how far the

Chief Secretary was able to carry out the promises he had given. He had no doubt that the reduction of the police force would largely depend upon the position which the Irish tenants took towards the carrying out of that Act. [Some cries of "What about the landlords?"]

MR. COGHILL (Stoke-upon-Trent) thought the time had come for the Irish Constabulary to be treated in the same way as any other police force in the United Kingdom. He remembered very well the intense feeling which was aroused in Ireland during Mr. Parnell's life, but he was a leader who arose once in 100 years, and he did not think they were likely to see such a leader again in Ireland. In his opinion this reform in regard to the police ought to have been carried out before the Land Bill was introduced. What right had this country to spend all the money proposed to be spent under the Land Bill without first granting to Ireland the control of the Irish Constabulary? He did not quite understand a reply given to a Question with regard to the police force which was put by the hon. Member for South Donegal. The Chief Secretary told the House last year that he was going to carry out great savings in regard to the Irish Constabulary. He hoped one of those savings was not that indicated in the reply he had given to the Question put by the hon. Member for South Donegal, because he stated that the police were to be armed with magazine carbines. They had been told that His Majesty the King was going to visit Ireland again, and he hoped that visit would be signalised by the carrying out of some scheme for placing the Irish Constabulary upon the same footing as the police force in this country because he thought Irishmen ought to be treated exactly in the same way as Englishmen. He did not wish to stand between the House and a division, but he felt that it was necessary to say a word or two in order to explain any vote he might give. He thought a reform in this direction would do more to promote a feeling of peace, goodwill, and amity between the two nations than anything else.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 65; Noes 157. (Division List No. 73.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Ambrose, Robert
Boland, John
Burns, John
Caldwell, James
Campbell, John (Armagh, S.)
Causton, Richard Knight
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cremer, William Randal
Crooks, William
Cullinan, J.
Delany, William
Devlin, Charles Ramsay (Galw'y
Devlin, Joseph (Kilkenny, N.)
Dewar, John A. (Inverness-sh.
Doogan, P. C.
Edwards, Frank
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
Fuller, J. M. F.
Gilhooly, James
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Harmsworth, R. Leicester
Hayden, John Patrick
Horniman, Frederick John
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Joyce, Michael
Kilbride, Denis
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leamy, Edmund
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, David
Lough, Thomas
Lyell, Charles Henry
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
M'Hugh, Patrick A.
M'Killop, W. (Sligo, North)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Mooney, John J.
Murphy, John
Nolan, Joseph (Louth, S.)
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N
O'Malley, William
O'Mara, James
Power, Patrick Joseph
Rea, Russell
Redmond, John E. (Waterford
Redmond, William (Clare)
Robson, William Snowdon
Roche, John
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Sullivan, Donal
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Whitley, J. H. (Halifax)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Captain Donelan and Mr. Patrick O'Brien.

NOES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arnold-Forster, Rt. Hn. Hugh O
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Bailey, James (Walworth)
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Manch'r
Balfour, Rt. Hn Gerald W. (Leeds
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Bathurst, Hon. Allen Benjamin
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir Michael Hicks
Bigwood, James
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Bull, William James
Butcher, John George
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.

Cautley, Henry Strother
Cavendish,V. C. W (Derbyshire
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Chamberlain,Rt.Hn.J.A.(Worc
Chapman, Edward
Charrington, Spencer
Churchill, Winston Spencer
Clare, Octavius Leigh
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Coates, Edward Feetham
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole
Corbett, T. L. (Down, N.)
Cox, Irwin Edward Bainbridge
Crossley, Rt. Hon. Sir Savile
Cust, Henry John C.
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Davenport, William Bromley
Davies,Sir Horatio D(Chatham
Dickson, Charles Scott
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph
Dorington,Rt. Hon. Sir JohnE.
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
FitzGerald,Sir Robert Penrose
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Flower, Sir Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Fyler, John Arthur
Galloway, William Johnson
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, Hon A. G. H.
Godson,Sir Augustus Frederick
Gordon, Hn J E (Elgin & Nairn
Gore, Hon. S. F. Ormsby-(Linc.
Goschen, Hon. George Joachim
Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
Greene, Henry D.(Shrewsbury)
Grenfell, William Henry
Gretton, John
Groves, James Grimble
Hambro, Charles Eric
Hamilton,Marq.of(L'nd'nderry
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harris, F. Leverton(Tynem'th)
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hope, J.F.(Sheffield,Brightside
Horner, Frederick William
Hozier,Hon.James Henry Cecil
Hunt, Rowland
Jeffreys, Rt. Hon. Arthur Fred
Jessel, Captain Herbert Merton
Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
Kenyon, Hon. Geo. T.(Denbigh
Kenyon-Slaney, Col.W. (Salop.
Keswick, William
Law, Andrew Bonar (Glasgow)
Lawrence,Sir Joseph (Monm'th
Lawson,John Grant(Yorks.NR
Lee,ArthurH.(Hants.,Fareham
Lees, Sir Elliott (Birkenhead)
Leveson-Gower, Frederick N S.
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Long,Rt.Hn.Walter (Bristol, S
Lowe, Francis William
Lucas, Col. Francis (Lowestoft
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
Macdona, John Cumming
MacIver, David (Liverpool)
M'Arthur, Charles (Liverpool)
Majendie, James A. H.
Manners, Lord Cecil
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Maxwell,Rt Hn Sir H E(Wigt'n
Maxwell,W J H (Dumfriesshire
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Montagu, G. (Huntingdon)
Morgan,David J(Walthamstow
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison, James Archibald
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Mowbray, Sir Robert Gray C.
Murray,Rt Hn A Graham(Bute
Nicholson, William Graham
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Parker, Sir Gilbert
Pease,Herbert Pike(Darlington
Percy, Earl
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Rasch, Sir Frederick Carne
Reid, James (Greenock)
Remnant, James Farquharson
Ridley,Hon. M. W.(Stalybridge
Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Royds, Clement Molyneux
Rutherford, W.W. (Liverpool)
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Sandys, Lieut.-Col Thos. Myles
Saunderson,Rt.Hn.Col.Edw. J.
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Smith,Abel H.(Hertford, East)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanley, Hon.Arthur(Ormskirk
Stanley, Rt. Hon. Lord(Lancs.)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuff, Charles
Valentia, Viscount
Warde, Colonel C. E.
Welby,Lt.-Col.A.C.E.(Taunton
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson,A. Stanley(York, E. R.)
Wilson, John (Glasgow)
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Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B.Stuart
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE NOES--Sir Alexander Acland - Hood and Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said that with the leave of the House he might make the statements he had promised as to business after Easter. The Navy Votes would be taken on the day of meeting, the Licensing Bill on Wednesday, the Army Votes on Thursday, and the Motion to get the Speaker out of the Chair would be taken on Monday. The Budget would, he believed, be taken on Tuesday, the 19th.

SIR FRANCIS POWELL (Wigan) rose to call attention to the importance of holding a quinquennial census in the year 1906, but the opening remarks of the hon. Member were interrupted by a count.

Notice taken that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present,

The House was adjourned.

Adjourned at twenty minutes after Eleven o'clock till Tuesday, 12th April.

[APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

PUBLIC BILLS

DEALT WITH IN VOLUME CXXXII.

Those marked thus * are Government Bills. The figures in parentheses in the last column refer to the page in this volume. "[H.L.]" following title indicates that the Bill originated in the Lords.

(A.) House of Lords.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
Bishopric of Bristol [H.L.]	*Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*	Read 3^a and passed 18th Mar. (48)
*Consolidated Fund (No. 1)	*Lord Windsor*	All Stages 28th Mar. (807) Royal Assent 29th Mar. (955)
*Justices of the Peace [H.L.]	*Lord Chancellor*	Read 3^a and passed 18th Mar. (48)
*Metropolitan Improvement Funds	*Lord Windsor*	Read 1^a 24th Mar. (592) Read 2^a 25th Mar. (738) Read 3^a 28th Mar. (807) Royal Assent 29th Mar. (955)
*Naval Prize [H.L.]	*Lord Chancellor*	Read 2^a 22nd Mar. (375) Committee Report 24th Mar. (592) Read 3^a and passed 25th Mar. (738)
*Open Spaces [H.L.]	*Earl of Onslow*	Read 1^a 24th Mar. (583)
Outdoor Relief (Friendly Societies) [H.L.]	*Lord Monkswell*	Read 1^a 24th Mar. (583)
Prevention of Cruelty to Children Amendment [H.L.]	*Lord Alverstone*	Committee Report 21st Mar. (116) Read 3^a and passed 22nd Mar. (378)
*Site for Duke of York's School [H.L.]	*Lord Windsor*	Committee 24th Mar. (584) Report 25th Mar. (738) Read 3^a and passed 28th Mar. (807)
Street Betting [H.L.]	*Lord Davey*	Read 1^a 21st Mar. (116)
Telegraph (Money)	*Earl Waldegrave*	All Stages, Royal Assent 29th Mar. (955)

(B.) House of Commons.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
*Aliens	*Mr. Akers-Douglas*	Read 1° 29th March (987)
*Bishoprics of Southwark and Birmingham	*Mr. A. J. Balfour*	Read 1° 24th March (643)
*Consolidated Fund (No. 1)	*Mr. Austen Chamberlain*	Read 1° 23rd March (525) Read 2° 24th March (644) (724) Committee Report 25th Mar. (803) Read 3° and passed 28th March (905) (919) Royal Assent 29th March (1010)
*Dogs	*Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes*	Read 2° 23rd March (540)
*Education (Scotland)	*Mr. Graham Murray*	Read 1° 28th March (864)
*Electric Lighting (London)	*Mr. Gerald Balfour*	Read 2° 23rd March (533)
False (Characters)	*Mr. Skewes Cox*	Read 1° 28th March (863)
Franchise and Removal of Women's Disabilities [No. 2]	*Sir Charles Dilke*	Read 1° 21st March (252)
Hall-Marking of Foreign Plate	*Mr. Samuel Roberts*	Read 2° 18th March (61)
*Justices of the Peace [H.L.]	*Mr. Akers-Douglas*	Read 1° 24th March (405)
Market Gardeners Compensation	*Col. Long*	Read 1° 28th March (863)
*Metropolitan Improvement (Funds)	*Mr. Victor Cavendish*	Read 2° 22nd March (451) Committee Report } 23rd Mar. Read 3° passed } (531) Royal Assent 29th March (1010)
*Naval Prize [H.L.]	*Sir Robert Finlay*	Read 1° 29th March (987)
*Police Superannuation	*Mr. Cochrane*	Read 2° 23rd March (506)
Private Legislation Procedure (Wales)	*Mr. Vaughan Davies*	Read 2° 25th March (750)
Railways (Private Sidings)	*Sir John Brunner*	Read 2° 18th March (55)
Rating of Machinery	*Mr. Chapman*	Read 2° 18th March (88)
*Reformatory and Industrial Schools (Scotland)	*Mr. Cochrane*	Read 2° 22nd March (450)
Savings Bank Act Amendment	*Sir Albert Rollit*	Read 2° 18th March (81)

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
Shops	*Sir Charles Dilke*	Second Reading (Adjourned) 25th March (794)
*Site for Duke of York's School	*Lord Balacarres*	Read 1° 29th March (987)
Steam Engines and Boilers (Persons in Charge)	*Mr. John Johnson*	Read 1° 24th March (643)
*Telegraph (Money)	*Lord Stanley*	Read 1° 23rd March (531) Read 2° 24th March (721) Committee Report 28th March (952) Read 3° and passed 29th March (996) Royal Assent 29th March (1010)
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APPENDIX II.

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LIST OF RULES, ORDERS, &c., which have been presented during the Session, and are required by Statute to lie for an appointed number of Days upon the Table of the House.

[*In continuance of List given in preceding Volume.*]

Title of Paper.	Date from which the Period runs.	Period to lie upon the Table.
Agricultural and Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act, 1899.—Copy of Order transferring to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland the powers and duties of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland in respect of the portion of the Sea and Coast Fisheries Fund placed at the disposal of the Department by the Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act, 1899 [62 and 63 Vic., c. 50, s. 28 (2)]	29 March	40 days
Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act, 1899.—Copy of Amended Regulations made by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland as to the taking of samples under the Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act, 1893 [62 and 63 Vic., c. 50, s. 28 (2)]	29 March	40 days
Local Bankruptcy (Ireland) Act, 1888.—Copy of Order in Council, dated 24th March, 1904, adding the county of Armagh to the district assigned to the Belfast Local Bankruptcy Court [51 and 52 Vic., c. 44, s. 18]	29 March	100 days

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[AUTHORISED EDITION].

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Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

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